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In the sweetness of childhood

Grace Hartshorne, Maude Goodman

KD 1409





Mother's Happiness.

From painting by G. Papperitz.

In the
Sweetness of Childhood
Poems of Mother Love

Selected by
Grace Hartshorne.

"A dreary place would be this earth,
Were there no little people in it;
The song of life would lose its mirth,
Were there no children to begin it."
— J. G. WHITTIER.



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PREFACE.

The compiler of this book has aimed to include the best available poems on the theme of childhood. She has purposely omitted, however, a few of the most hackneyed selections in order to make room for others which seem to her quite as meritorious, though not so widely known. The result of her labours must be left to the reader. Critics may easily discover sins of commission and of omission, but if lovers of children find half the pleasure in perusing these verses that the editor had in gathering them, she will be more than satisfied. Thanks are due to all who contributed by suggestions and encouragement toward the book's preparation, and especially to the publishers who have generously consented to the use of copyrighted poems. The selections by Longfellow, Stedman, Phoebe Cary, Celia Thaxter, and Mrs. Margaret E. Sangster are included "by arrangement with, and by special permission of, Houghton, Mifflin and Company, publishers of the works of Longfellow, Mr. Stedman, Miss Thaxter, Mrs. Sangster, and the Cary sisters."

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MOTHER - LOVE

IN THE SWEETNESS OF CHILDHOOD.

TO A CHILD.

IF by any device or knowledge,
The rosebud its beauty could know,
It would stay a rosebud for ever,
Nor into its fulness grow.

And if thou could'st know thy own sweetness,
O little one, perfect and sweet !
Thou would'st be a child for ever,
Completer whilst incomplete.

— *Francis Turner Palgrave.*

COMPENSATION.

SHE folded up the worn and mended frock,
 And smoothed it tenderly upon her knee,
 Then through the soft web of a wee red sock
 She wove the bright wool, musing thoughtfully :
 "Can this be all? The outside world so fair,
 I hunger for its green and pleasant ways;
 A cripple prisoned in her restless chair
 Looks from her window with a wistful gaze.

"The fruits I cannot reach are red and sweet,
 The paths forbidden are both green and wide;
 O God! there is no boon to helpless feet
 So altogether sweet as paths denied.
 Home is most fair; bright all my household fires,
 And children are a gift without alloy;
 But who would bound the field of their desires
 By the prim hedges of mere fireside joy?

"I can but weave a faint thread to and fro,
 Making a frail woof in my baby's sock;
 Into the world's sweet tumult I would go,
 At its strong gates my trembling hand would
 knock."

Just then the children came, the father too ;
Their eager faces lit the twilight gloom ;
“ Dear heart,” he whispered, as he nearer drew,
“ How sweet it is within this little room !

“ God puts my strongest comfort here to draw
When thirst is great and common wells are dry.
Your pure desire is my unerring law,
Tell me, dear one, who is so safe as I ?
Home is the pasture where my soul may feed,
This room a paradise has grown to be ;
And only where these patient feet shall lead
Can it be home to these dear ones and me.”

He touched with reverent hand the helpless feet,
The children crowded close and kissed her hair.
“ Our mother is so good, and kind, and sweet,
There’s not another like her anywhere ! ”
The baby in her low bed opened wide
The soft blue flowers of her timid eyes,
And viewed the group about the cradle-side
With smiles of glad and innocent surprise.

The mother drew the baby to her knee
And, smiling, said : “ The stars shine soft tonight ;
My world is fair ; its edges sweet to me,
And whatsoever is, dear Lord, is right.”

✓ A MOTHER'S LOVE.

HER, by her smile, how soon the stranger
knows;
How soon by his the glad discovery shows,
As to her lips she lifts the lovely boy,
What answering looks of sympathy and joy!
He walks, he speaks. In many a broken word,
His wants, his wishes, and his griefs are heard.
And ever, ever to her lap he flies,
When rosy sleep comes on with sweet surprise.
Locked in her arms, his arms across her flung
(That name most dear for ever on his tongue),
As with soft accents round her neck he clings,
And, cheek to cheek, her lulling song she sings;
How blest to feel the beatings of his heart,
Breathe his sweet breath, and bliss for bliss impart;
Watch o'er his slumbers like the brooding dove,
And, if she can, exhaust a mother's love!

— *Samuel Rogers.*

A MOTHER TO HER NEW-BORN CHILD. ✓

SWEET cry! as sacred as the blessed hymn
Sung at Christ's birth by joyful seraphim!
Exhausted nigh to death by that dread pain,
That voice salutes me to dear life again.
Ah, God! my child! my first, my living child!
I have been dreaming of a thing like thee
Ere since, a babe, upon the mountains wild,
I nursed my mimic babe upon my knee.
In girlhood I had visions of thee; love
Came to my riper youth, and still I clove
Unto thine image, born within my brain
So like! as even there thy germ had lain!
My blood! my voice! my thought! my dream
achieved!
Oh, till this double life, I have not lived!

— *Thomas Wade.*

THE MOTHER.

L O! at the couch where infant beauty sleeps,
Her silent watch the mournful mother keeps;
She, while the lovely babe unconscious lies,
Smiles on her slumbering child with pensive eyes,

16 IN THE SWEETNESS OF CHILDHOOD.

And weaves a song of melancholy joy —
“ Sleep, image of thy father, sleep, my boy :
No lingering hour of sorrow shall be thine ;
No sigh that rends thy father’s heart and mine ;
Bright as his manly sire the son shall be
In form and soul ; but ah ! more blest than he !
Thy fame, thy worth, thy filial love, at last,
Shall soothe this aching heart for all the past —
With many a smile my solitude repay,
And chase the world’s ungenerous scorn away.

“ And say, when summoned from the world and thee,
I lay my head beneath the willow-tree,
Wilt thou, sweet mourner ! at my stone appear,
And soothe my parted spirit lingering near ?
Oh, wilt thou come, at evening hour, to shed
The tears of memory o’er my narrow bed ?

— *Thomas Campbell.*

A MOTHER’S SONG.

OH, come now, my darling,
And lie on my breast,
For that’s the soft pillow
My baby loves best ;

Peace rest on thine eyelids,
As sweetly they close,
And thoughts of to-morrow
Ne'er break thy repose.
What dreams in thy slumber,
Dear baby, are thine?
Thy sweet lips are smiling,
When pressed thus to mine.
All lovely and guileless
Thou sleepest in joy,
And Heaven watches over my beautiful boy.
Oh, would thus that ever
My darling might smile,
And still be a baby
My griefs to beguile;
But hope whispers sweetly,
"Ne'er broken shall be
The tie that unites my sweet baby to me."

— *Alexander Smart.*

HOW'S MY BOY?

"H O, sailor of the sea !
How's my boy — my boy ?"
"What's your boy's name, good wife,
And in what ship sailed he ?"

"My boy John —
He that went to sea —
What care I for the ship, sailor ?
My boy's my boy to me.

"You come back from sea,
And not know my John ?
I might as well have asked some landsman,
Yonder down in the town.
There's not an ass in all the parish
But he knows my John.

"How's my boy — my boy ?
And unless you let me know,
I'll swear you are no sailor,
Blue jacket or no,
Brass buttons or no, sailor !
Anchor and crown or no !
Sure his ship was the *Jolly Briton* " —
"Speak low, woman, speak low !"

Awakening Love.
From painting by L. Perrault.



"And why should I speak low, sailor,
About my own boy John?
If I was loud as I am proud
I'd sing him over the town!
Why should I speak low, sailor?"
"That good ship went down."

"How's my boy — my boy?
What care I for the ship, sailor?
I was never aboard her.
Be she afloat or be she aground,
Sinking or swimming, I'll be bound
Her owner can afford her!
I say, how's my John?"

"Every man on board went down,
Every man aboard her."

"How's my boy — my boy?
What care I for the men, sailor?
I'm not their mother —
How's my boy — my boy?
Tell me of him and no other!
How's my boy — my boy?"

— *Sydney Dobell.*

THE BABY'S DRAWER.

THERE'S a little drawer in my chamber,
Guarded with tender care,
Where the dainty clothes are lying,
That my darling shall never wear.

And there, while the hours are waning
Till the house is all at rest,
I sit and fancy a baby
Close to my aching breast.

My darling's pretty white garments !
I wrought them sitting apart,
While his mystic life was throbbing
Under my throbbing heart.

I finished the dainty wardrobe,
And the drawer was almost full
With robes of the finest muslin
And robes of the whitest wool.

I folded them all together
With a rose for every pair,
Smiling and saying, "Grow fragrant,
Fit for my prince to wear."

Ah, the radiant summer morning,
So full of a mother's joy !
Thank God he is fair and perfect,
My beautiful, new-born boy.

.

Let him wear the pretty white garments
I wrought while sitting apart ;
Lay him so sweet and helpless,
Here close to my throbbing heart.

Many and many an evening
I sit since my baby came,
Saying, "What do the angels call him ?"
For he died without a name.

Sit while the hours are waning,
And the house is all at rest,
And fancy a baby nestling
Close to my aching breast.

THE MOTHER'S HOPE.

IS there, when the winds are singing
 In the happy summer time,
 When the raptured air is ringing
 With Earth's music heavenward springing,
 Forest chirp, and village chime,
 Is there, of the sounds that float
 Unsighingly, a single note
 Half so sweet, and clear, and wild,
 As the laughter of a child ?

Listen ! and be now delighted :
 Morn hath touched her golden strings ;
 Earth and Sky their vows have plighted ;
 Life and Light are reunited,
 Amid countless carollings ;
 Yet, delicious as they are,
 There's a sound that's sweeter far —
 One that makes the heart rejoice
 More than all, — the human voice.

Organ finer, deeper, clearer,
 Though it be a stranger's tone —
 Than the winds or waters dearer,
 More enchanting to the hearer,
 For it answereth to his own,

But, of all its witching words,
Sweeter than the songs of birds,
Those are sweetest, bubbling wild
Through the laughter of a child.

Harmonies from time-touched towers,
 Haunted strains from rivulets,
Hum of bees among the flowers,
Rustling leaves, and silver showers, —
 These, ere long, the ear forgets ;
But in mine there is a sound
Ringing on the whole year round —
Heart-deep laughter that I heard
Ere my child could speak a word.

Ah ! 'twas heard by ear far purer,
 Fondlier formed to catch the strain —
Ear of one whose love is surer —
Hers, the mother, the endurer
 Of the deepest share of pain ;
Hers the deepest bliss to treasure
Memories of that cry of pleasure ;
Hers to hoard a lifetime after,
Echoes of that infant laughter.

'Tis a mother's large affection
 Hears with a mysterious sense —

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Breathings that evade detection,
Whisper faint, and fine inflexion,
 Thrill in her with power intense.
Childhood's honeyed words untaught
Hiveth she in loving thought —
Tones that never thence depart;
For she listens — with her heart.

— *Laman Blanchard.*

THE BOY MINSTREL.

HE sang so wildly, did the boy,
That you could never tell
If 'twas a madman's voice you heard,
Or if the spirit of a bird
Within his heart did dwell, —
A bird that dallies with his voice
Among the matted branches;
Or on the free blue air his note,
To pierce, and fall, and rise, and float,
With bolder utterance launches.
None ever was so sweet as he,
The boy that wildly sang to me.

.
A little in the doorway sitting,
The mother plied her busy knitting;

And her cheek so softly smiled,
You might be sure, although her gaze
Was on the meshes of the lace,
Yet her thoughts were with her child.

But when the boy had heard her voice,
As o'er her work she did rejoice,
His became silent altogether ;
And slyly creeping by the wall,
He seized a single plume, let fall
By some wild bird of longest feather ;
And all a tremble with his freak,
He touched her lightly on the cheek.
O what a loveliness her eyes
Gather in that one moment's space,
While peeping round the post she spies
Her darling's laughing face !
O mother's love is glorifying,
On the cheek like sunset lying ;
In the eyes a moistened light,
Softer than the moon at night !

— *Thomas Burbridge.*

THE MOTHER'S SACRIFICE.

THE cold winds swept the mountain's height,
And pathless was the dreary wild,
And mid the cheerless hours of night
A mother wandered with her child :
As through the drifting snow she pressed,
The babe was sleeping on her breast.

And colder still the winds did blow,
And darker hours of night came on,
And deeper grew the drifting snow :
Her limbs were chilled, her strength was gone.
"O God!" she cried in accents wild,
"If I must perish, save my child!"

She stripped her mantle from her breast,
And bared her bosom to the storm,
And round the child she wrapped the vest,
And smiled to think her babe was warm.
With one cold kiss, one tear she shed,
And sunk upon her snowy bed.

At dawn a traveller passed by,
And saw her 'neath a snowy veil ;

The frost of death was in her eye,
Her cheek was cold and hard and pale.
He moved the robe from off the child, —
The babe looked up and sweetly smiled !

— *Seba Smith.*

MY NEIGHBOUR'S BABY.

A CROSS in my neighbour's window,
With its drapings of satin and lace,
I see, 'neath a crown of ringlets,
A baby's innocent face.
His feet in their wee red slippers,
Are tapping the polished glass,
And the crowd in the street look upward,
And nod and smile as they pass.

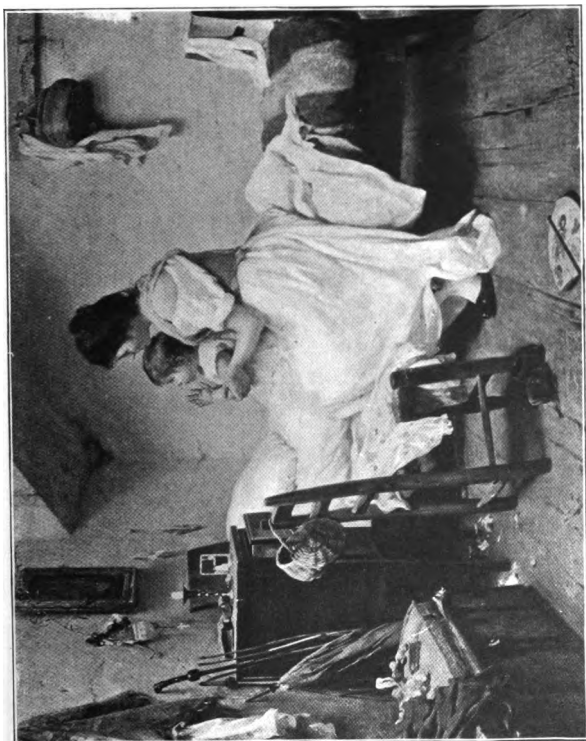
Just here, in my cottage window,
Catching flies in the sun,
With a patch on a faded apron,
Stands my own little one.
His face is as pure and handsome
As the baby's over the way,
And he keeps my heart from breaking,
At my toiling, every day.

Sometimes, when the day is ended,
 And I sit in the dusk to rest,
 With the face of my sleeping darling
 Hugged close to my lonely breast,
 I pray that my neighbour's baby
 May not catch heaven's roses all;
 But that some may crown the forehead
 Of my loved one, as they fall.

And when I draw the stockings
 From his little tired feet,
 And kiss the rosy dimples
 In his limbs so round and sweet,
 I think of the dainty garments
 Some little children wear,
 And frown that my God withholds them
 From mine, so pure and fair.

May God forgive my envy,
 I knew not what I said;
 My heart is crushed and humbled,
 My neighbour's boy is dead!
 I saw the little coffin
 As they carried it out to-day;
 A mother's heart is breaking
 In the mansion over the way.

The Morning Prayer.
From painting by S. G. Rotta.



The light is fair in my window ;
The flowers bloom at my door ;
My boy is chasing the sunbeams
That dance on the cottage floor ;
The roses of health are blushing
On my darling's cheek to-day ;
But baby is gone from the window
Of the mansion over the way.

THE CHILD ASLEEP.

SWEET babe ! true portrait of thy father's face,
Sleep on the bosom that thy lips have pressed !
Sleep, little one ; and closely, gently place
Thy drowsy eyelid on thy mother's breast.

Upon that tender eye, my little friend,
Soft sleep shall come, that cometh not to me !
I watch to see thee, nourish thee, defend ;
'Tis sweet to watch for thee — alone for thee !

His arms fall down ; sleep sits upon his brow ;
His eye is closed ; he sleeps, nor dreams of harm.
Wore not his cheek the apple's ruddy glow,
Would you not say he slept on Death's cold arm ?

Awake, my boy ! — I tremble with affright !

Awake, and chase this fatal thought ! — Unclose
Thine eye but for one moment on the light !
Even at the price of thine, give me repose !

Sweet error ! — he but slept — I breathe again.

Come, gentle dreams, the hour of sleep beguile !
Oh, when shall he, for whom I sigh in vain,
Beside me watch to see thy waking smile ?

— *Clotilde De Surville.*

Translated by H. W. Longfellow.

BABY PAUL.

UP in the early morning,
Just at the peep of day,
Driving the sleep from my eyelids,
Pulling the quilts away ;
Pinching my cheeks and my forehead
With his white fingers small ;
This is my bright-eyed darling,
This is my baby Paul.

Down on the floor in the parlour,
Creeping with laugh and shout,
Or out in the kitchen and pantry,
Tossing the things about ;

Rattling the pans and the kettles,
Scratching the table and wall;
This is my roguish darling,
This is my baby Paul.

Riding on papa's shoulder,
Trotting on grandpa's knee,
Pulling his hair and whiskers,
Laughing in wildest glee;
Reaching for grandma's knitting,
Snatching her thimble and ball;
This is our household idol,
This is our baby Paul.

Playing bo-peep with his brother,
Kissing the little girls,
Roaming with aunt and uncles,
Clutching his sister's curls;
Teasing old puss from his slumbers,
Pattering o'er porch and hall;
This is our bonny wee darling,
This is our baby Paul.

Nestling up close to my bosom,
Laying his cheek to mine,
Covering my mouth with his kisses
Sweeter than golden wine,

Flinging his white arms about me,
 Soft as the snow-flakes fall ;
 This is my cherished darling,
 This is my baby Paul.

Dearer, a thousand times dearer,
 The wealth in my darling I hold,
 Than all the earth's glittering treasure,
 Its glory, and honours, and gold ;
 If these at my feet were now lying,
 I'd gladly renounce them all,
 For the sake of my bright-eyed darling,
 My dear little baby Paul.

— *Mrs. Bishop Thompson.*

A MOTHER'S JOYS.

I'VE gear enough, I've gear enough,
 I've bonnie bairnies three ;
 Their welfare is a mine of wealth,
 Their love a crown to me.
 The joys, the dear delights they bring,
 I'm sure I'd not agree
 To change for every worldly good
 That could be given me.

Let others flaunt in Fashion's ring,
Seek rank and high degree ;
I wish them joy, with all my heart, —
They're envied not by me.
I would not give those loving looks,
The heaven of those smiles,
To bear the proudest name — to be
The Queen of Britain's Isles.

My sons are like their father dear,
And all the neighbours tell
That my young blue-eyed daughter's just
The picture o' mysel'.
Oh, blessings on my darlings all !
They're dear as summer's shine ;
My heart runs o'er with happiness
To think that they are mine !

At evening, morning, every hour,
I've an unchanging prayer,
That heaven would my bairnies bless, —
My hope, my joy, my care.
I've gear enough, I've gear enough,
I've bonnie bairnies three ;
Their welfare is a mine of wealth,
Their love a crown to me.

— *William Fergusson.*

SLUMBER ON, BABY DEAR.

SLUMBER on, Baby dear ;
Do not hear thy mother's sigh
Breathed for him far away,
While she sings thy lullaby !

Slumber on ; o'er thy sleep
Loving eyes will watch with care ;
In thy dreams may thou see
God's own angels hovering here.

Slumber on ; may sweet sleep
Softly on thine eyelids lie,
While I watch, chanting low,
Thy sweet, soothing lullaby.

Slumber on, happy child ;
May life's storms pass gently by,
When this voice, hushed and still,
No more sings thy lullaby !

In this heart, torn with grief,
Lies a doting love for thee ;
Father, come, bless our child,
Sweetly slumbering on my knee.

— *From the Italian, by H. C. Watson.*

WHAT IS THAT, MOTHER?

“ **W**HAT is that, mother? ”

“ The lark, my child.

The morn has but just looked out and smiled,
When he starts from his humble grassy nest,
And is up and away, with the dew on his breast,
And a hymn in his heart to yon pure sphere,
To warble it out in his Maker's ear.
Ever, my child, be thy morn's first lays
Tuned, like the lark's, to thy Maker's praise.”

“ What is that, mother? ”

“ The dove, my son ;

And that low, sweet voice, like a widow's moan,
Is flowing out from her gentle breast,
Constant and pure by that lonely nest,
As the wave is poured from some crystal urn,
For her distant dear one's quick return.
Ever, my son, be thou faithful like the dove ;
In friendship as faithful, as constant in love.”

“ What is that, mother? ”

“ The eagle, boy,

Proudly careering his course with joy ;
Firm on his own mountain vigour relying,
Breasting the dark storm, the red bolt defying ;

36 IN THE SWEETNESS OF CHILDHOOD.

His wing on the wind, and his eye on the sun,
He swerves not a hair, but bears onward, right on.
Boy, may the eagle's flight ever be thine, —
Onward, and upward, and true to the line."

"What is that, mother?"

"The swan, my boy ;

He is floating down from his native grove.

No loved one now is nestling nigh ;

He is floating down by himself to die.

Death darkens his eye and unplumes his wings,

Yet the sweetest song is the last he sings.

Live so, my child, that when death shall come,

Swan-like and sweet it may waft thee home."

— *Bishop Doane.*

THE WAIL OF THE CORNISH MOTHER.

THEY say 'tis a sin to sorrow,
That what God doth is best ;
But 'tis only a month to-morrow
I buried it from my breast.

I thought it would call me Mother,
The very first words it said :
O, I never can love another
Like the blessed babe that's dead,

Well! God is its own dear Father ;
It was carried to church, and blessed ;
And our Saviour's arms will gather
Such children to their rest.

I will make my best endeavour
That my sins may be forgiven ;
I will serve God more than ever,
To meet my child in heaven.

I will check this foolish sorrow,
For what God doth is best —
But O, 'tis a month to-morrow
I buried it from my breast !

— *R. S. Hawker.*

IT was her first sweet child, her heart's delight ;
And, though we all foresaw his early doom,
We kept the fearful secret out of sight ;
We saw the canker, but she'd kiss the bloom.

And yet it might not be : we could not brook
To vex her happy heart with vague alarms,
To blanch with fear her fond intrepid look,
Or send a thrill through those encircling arms.

She smiled upon him, waking or at rest :
 She could not dream her little child would die :
 She tossed him fondly with an upward eye :
 She seemed as buoyant as a summer spray,
 That dances with a blossom on its breast,
 Nor knows how soon it will be borne away.

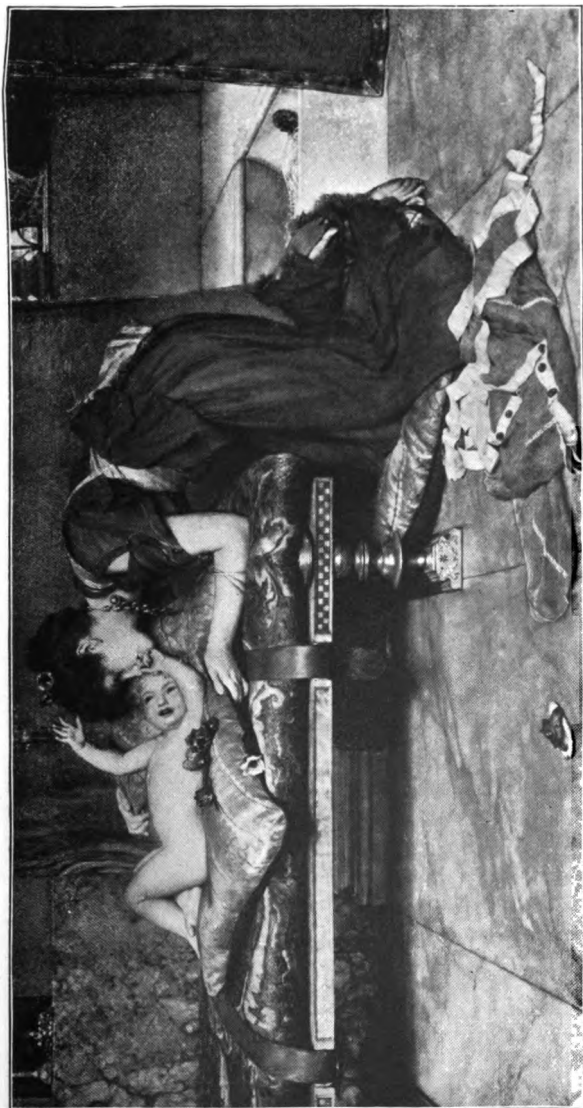
— *C. Tennyson-Turner.*

TIRED MOTHERS.

A LITTLE elbow leans upon your knee,
 Your tired knee, that has so much to bear ;
 A child's dear eyes are looking lovingly
 From underneath a thatch of tangled hair.
 Perhaps you do not heed the velvet touch
 Of warm, moist fingers, folding yours so tight ; —
 You do not prize this blessing overmuch ;
 You almost are too tired to pray to-night.

But it is blessedness ! A year ago
 I did not see it as I do to-day. —
 We are so dull and thankless ; and too slow
 To catch the sunshine till it slips away.
 And now it seems surpassing strange to me
 That, while I wore the badge of motherhood,
 I did not kiss more oft and tenderly
 The little child that brought me only good.

An Earthly Paradise.
From painting by L. Alma Tadema.



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And if, some night, when you sit down to rest,
You miss this elbow from your tired knee,
This restless, curling head from off your breast,
This lisping tongue that chatters constantly ;
If from your own the dimpled hands had slipped,
And ne'er would nestle in your palm again ;
If the white feet into their grave had tripped,
I could not blame you for your heartache then !

I wonder so that mothers ever fret
At little children clinging to their gown,
Or that the footprints, when the days are wet,
Are ever black enough to make them frown.
If I could find a little muddy boot,
Or cap, or jacket, on my chamber floor ;
If I could kiss a rosy, restless foot,
And hear its patter in my home once more ;

If I could mend a broken cart to-day,
To-morrow make a kite to reach the sky, —
There is no woman in God's world could say
She was more blissfully content than I.
But ah ! the dainty pillow next my own
Is never rumpled by a shining head ;
My singing birdling from its nest has flown,
The little boy I used to kiss is dead.

— *Mrs. May Riley Smith.*

THAT BABY OVER THE WAY.

AS I've sat at my chamber window,
 I've noticed, again and again,
 The sweetest of baby fingers
 At the opposite window-pane ;
 Rosy cheeks daintily dimpled,
 Curls, that without any check
 Tumble and twist in confusion
 With the corals about its neck.

Eyes — but to mention the colour
 I must wait for a nearer view,
 Though I think I may state, at a venture,
 They'll match with the ribbons of blue.
 Feet with their tiny bronzed slippers,
 And the dearest of wee chubby fists,
 And arms, in whose foldings of fatness
 You must search for the little one's wrists.

Sometimes I throw kisses to baby,
 And back come the kisses to me ;
 And the intricate game of "bo-peep"
 Is a source of infinite glee,
 That lights up the smiles and the dimples ;
 So I think I may truthfully say

That I have an established flirtation
With the baby over the way.

But how has the little one stolen
A march on my foolish old heart?
And why, as I watch those bright eyes,
Will the quick tear instinctively start?
Ah, because in the long years ago,
Ere time mixed my tresses with gray,
I, too, had a baby as lovely
As the little one over the way.

From the white robe and clustering curls,
From that vision of infantine joy,
Oh, sadly, so sadly I turn
To all I have left of my boy:
To the baby-clothes, yellow with age,
To the curl that once lay on his brow,
To the old-fashioned cradle—the nest
So drearily tenantless now.

The first grief comes back to me then,
The longing that cannot be told,
For the sight of the dear little face,
For my own darling baby to hold;
And my arms ache with emptiness so,
That I feel I am hardly content

To wait for the summons to go
The way that my little one went.

And so, for the sake of the joy
That long ago gladdened my heart,
For the light that once shone on my way,
So quickly, alas ! to depart ;
For the love that I bore my one darling,
All babies are dearer to-day ;
And I think I must call on the mother
Of that baby over the way.

KISS AND MAKE IT WELL.

I SIT at my window and sew and dream,
While my little boy at play
Bewiles my thoughts from hem and seam
As he frolics the livelong day ;
But time and again he comes to me
With a sorrowful tale to tell,
And mother must look at the scratch or bump,
Then kiss it and make it well.

So I kiss his head, and his knee, and his arm,
And the dear little grimy hand ;

SEND THEM TO BED WITH A KISS. 43

And who can fathom the magic charm,
And who can understand?
For I even kiss when he bites his tongue,
And love works its mystic spell,
For there's never a cut, nor a scratch, nor a bump,
But mother can kiss it well.

'Tis a foolish whim, do you say? Ah, yes!
But the foolish things of earth
Have taught the wise, since a little child
In Bethlehem had his birth.
And we know that many an older heart —
We know, but we do not tell —
Will never be free from its bitter smart
Till kisses have made it well.

SEND THEM TO BED WITH A KISS.

OH, mothers, so weary, discouraged,
Worn out by the cares of the day,
You often grow cross and impatient,
Complain of the noise and the play;
For the day brings so many vexations,
So many things going amiss;
But, mothers, whatever may vex you,
Send the children to bed with a kiss!

44 *IN THE SWEETNESS OF CHILDHOOD.*

The dear little feet wander often,
Perhaps, from the pathway of right ;
The dear little hands find new mischief
To try you from morn till night ;
But think of the desolate mothers
Who'd give all the world for your bliss,
And, as thanks for your infinite blessings,
Send the children to bed with a kiss !

For some day their noise will not vex you,
The silence will hurt you far more,
You will long for the sweet children voices,
For a sweet childish face at the door,
And to press a child's face to your bosom,
You'd give all the world for just this ;
For the comfort 'twill bring you in sorrow,
Send the children to bed with a kiss !

ROCKING THE BABY.

I HEAR her rocking the baby —
Her room is next to mine —
And I fancy I feel the dimpled arms
That round her neck entwine,
As she rocks and rocks the baby,
In the room just next to mine.

Mother's Darling.
From painting by M. Volkhart



I hear her rocking the baby
Each day when the twilight comes,
And I know there's a world of blessing and love
In the "baby-by" she hums.

I can see the restless fingers
Playing with "mamma's rings,"
The sweet little smiling, pouting mouth
That to hers in kissing clings,
As she rocks and sings to the baby,
And dreams as she rocks and sings.

I hear her rocking the baby,
Slower and slower now,
And I hear she is leaving her good-night kiss
On its eyes, and cheeks, and brow.

From her rocking, rocking, rocking,
I wonder would she start
Could she know, through the wall between us,
She is rocking on a heart?
While my empty arms are aching
For a form they may not press, —
And my empty heart is breaking
In its desolate loneliness. •

I list to the rocking, rocking,
 In the room just next to mine,
 And breathe a prayer in silence,
 At a mother's broken shrine,
 For the woman who rocks the baby
 In the room just next to mine.

— *Madge Morris.*

OUR LITTLE QUEEN.

COULD you have seen the violets
 That blossomed in her eyes;
 Could you have kissed that golden hair,
 And drank those holy sighs;
 You would have been her tiring-maid
 As joyfully as I, —
 Content to dress your little queen,
 And let the world go by.

Could you have seen those violets
 Hide in their graves of snow;
 Drawn all that gold along your hand
 While she lay smiling so; —
 O, you would tread this weary earth
 As heavily as I! —
 Content to clasp her little grave,
 And let the world go by.

— *Overland Monthly.*

THE YOUNG MOTHER.

THERE lay upon its mother's knee,
In love supremely blest,
An infant fair and full of glee,
Caressing and carest, —
While siren Hope with gladness wild,
And eye cerulean blue,
Bent sweetly down to kiss the child,
And kissed the mother too.

Then Memory came, with serious mien.
And looking back the while,
Cast such a shadow o'er the scene,
As dimmed Affection's smile, —
For still, to Fancy's brightest hours,
She gave a hue of care,
And bitter odours ting'd the flowers,
That wreath'd her sunny hair.

But in the youthful mother's soul,
Each cloud of gloom is brief,
For pure her raptured feelings roll
To take the tint of grief, —

Firm Faith, around her idol boy,
 A radiant mantle threw,
 And claimed for him a higher joy,
 Than Hope or Memory knew.

— *Anonymous.*

THE TROUBLESOME BABY.

THE little ones cling to the mother,
 With kisses that softly fall,
 But somehow the troublesome baby
 Is nearest her heart of all, —
 Ill and fretful and small,
 But dearest to mother of all.

The neighbours wonder and pity,
 Hearing its querulous cry.
 “She is losing her youth and beauty,”
 Say friends as they pass her by :
 “Well were the babe to die,
 And the mother have rest,” they sigh.

But over the wee white cradle,
 Her soft eyes full of prayer,
 Bendeth the weary mother ;
 And never was face so fair,

Pale, and tired with care, —
But the glory of love is there !

Rosy and round and dimpled,
Dewy with childish sleep,
She tucks in her other darlings,
Whom angels watch and keep.
Ah, if a darker angel
Anear this treasure creep !

Bless thee, beautiful mother !
Thy heart hath a place for all, —
Room for the joys and the sorrows,
However fast they fall ;
Room for the baby small,
That may love thee better than all.
— *Margaret Elizabeth Sangster.*

A MOTHER SINGING.

HARK, 'tis a mother singing to her child
Those madrigals that used her ears to greet,
When she, an infant like that spring-flower sweet,
Lent her charmed ears to nurse, or mother mild,
That sang those nursery stories strange and wild —

50 *IN THE SWEETNESS OF CHILDHOOD.*

Of knights, of robbers, and of fairy queens
Dwelling in castles 'mid enchanted scenes —
The songs which plain antiquity beguiled.

Or is her theme of him, her lord, whose bark
Is ploughing, 'neath his guidance, Indian seas ;
Or far detain'd by polar skies, that freeze
His glad return ? She, tuneful as the lark
That warbling soars, though Phoebus cease to smile,
Lifts her soft voice, and sings, though sad the while.

— *Edward Moxon.*

IN THE DOORWAY.

DID you ever see my baby —
My one, my only girl ?
She is not a blue-eyed lady,
No lily, nor a pearl ;
But a merry little gypsy,
With eyes as brown as berries,
A tiny dimple in her cheek,
And lips like luscious cherries.

Any pleasant summer evening,
If you will come with me,
You can view as fair a picture
As one may ever see.

There, framed within the doorway
By a crimson-tinted vine,
A setting fair as jewels rare,
Is that darling babe of mine.

She is pulling at the posies
With her little chubby hands,
As in eager expectation
She on tip-toe restless stands ;
Now she has dropped the blossoms
She had gathered in her glee,
And slyly peeps far down the street
To catch a glimpse of me.

She sees me, now she sees me,
And her eyes are all a gleam —
What gem can match their radiance
With the beauty of its sheen ?
What star can vie in splendour
With the lustrous light that lies
Imprisoned in the glorious depths
Of those love-beaming eyes ?

Step faster ! I must hasten
To clasp her in my arms ;
If death should snatch her from me,
This world would lose its charms.

God bless thee, little lady,
Is my prayer on bended knee —
God guard and guide the precious child
Who is all the world to me.
— *Louise C. Custice.*

THE LITTLE PINK SHOE.

ONLY a little pink baby shoe
That is stained and wrinkled and torn,
With a tiny hole where the little pink toe
Peeped out in the days that are gone.

The little pink toe was the "big little pig"
That to market so often would go,
And over and over the legend was told
As I kissed the little pink toe.

"Piggie some more," the red lips would lisp,
And the story and kiss were given
Again and again, so happy were we
In motherhood's foretaste of heaven.

But there came a night, with a desolate blight,
When death bore my idol away,
And no little toe ever peeps from the shoe
To be kissed in the sweet old way.

But my tears have deluged the little pink shoe
And stained it a deeper stain,
And I long for the touch that would chill me in
death
If it gave me my darling again.

So, when I am dead, lay the little pink shoe
Near my heart which is silent and cold,
And perhaps up above, in the sunlight of love,
I shall kiss the pink toe as of old.
— *Kate Thyson Marr.*

SLEEP, BABY, SLEEP!

SLEEP, baby, sleep!
Thy father watches his sheep;
Thy mother is shaking the dreamland tree,
And down comes a little dream on thee.
Sleep, baby, sleep!

Sleep, baby, sleep!
The large stars are the sheep;
The little stars are the lambs, I guess;
And the gentle moon is the shepherdess.
Sleep, baby, sleep!

Sleep, baby, sleep !
 Our Saviour loves His sheep ;
 He is the Lamb of God on high,
 Who for our sakes came down to die.
 Sleep, baby, sleep !

— *From the German.*

OLD GAELIC LULLABY.

HUSH ! the waves are rolling in,
 White with foam, white with foam ;
 Father toils amid the din ;
 But baby sleeps at home.

Hush ! the winds roar hoarse and deep, —
 On they come, on they come !
 Brother seeks the wandering sheep ;
 But baby sleeps at home.

Hush ! the rain sweeps o'er the knowes,
 Where they roam, where they roam ;
 Sister goes to seek the cows ;
 But baby sleeps at home.

— *Anon.*

THE MOTHER'S HEART.

WHEN first thou camest, gentle, shy and fond,
My eldest-born, first hope, and dearest
treasure,

My heart received thee with a joy beyond
All that it yet had felt of earthly pleasure ;
Nor thought that any love again might be
So deep and strong as that I felt for thee.

Faithful and true, with sense beyond thy years,
And natural piety that lean'd to heaven ;
Wrung by a harsh word suddenly to tears,
Yet patient to rebuke when justly given —
Obedient — easy to be reconciled —
And meekly cheerful — such wert thou, my child !

Not willing to be left ; still by my side
Haunting my walks, while summer-day was dy-
ing ; —
Nor leaving in thy turn ; but pleased to glide
Through the dark room where I was sadly
lying,
Or by the couch of pain, a sitter meek,
Watch the dim eye, and kiss the feverish cheek.

O boy! of such as thou are oftenest made
 Earth's fragile idols; like a tender flower,
 No strength in all thy freshness, — prone to fade, —
 And bending weakly to the thunder-shower, —
 Still, round the loved, thy heart found force to bind,
 And clung, like woodbine shaken in the wind!

Then *thou*, my merry love; — bold in thy glee,
 Under the bough, or by the firelight dancing,
 With thy sweet temper, and thy spirit free,
 Didst come, as restless as a bird's wing glancing,
 Full of a wild and irrepressible mirth,
 Like a young sunbeam to the gladden'd earth!

Thine was the shout! the song! the burst of joy!
 Which sweet from childhood's rosy lip resound-
 eth:
 Thine was the eager spirit naught could cloy,
 And the glad heart from which all grief re-
 boundeth;
 And many a mirthful jest and mock reply
 Lurk'd in the laughter of thy dark-blue eye!

And thine was many an art to win and bless,
 The cold and stern to fondness warming;
 The coaxing smile; — the frequent soft caress; —
 The earnest, tearful prayer all wrath disarming!

Again my heart a new affection found,
But thought that love with thee had reach'd its
bound.

At length *thou* camest : thou, the last and least ;
Nicknamed "The Emperor" by thy laughing
brothers,
Because a haughty spirit swelled thy breast,
And thou didst seek to rule and sway the others ;
Mingling with every playful infant wile
A mimic majesty that made us smile :

And oh ! most like a regal child wert thou !
An eye of resolute and successful scheming !
Fair shoulders—curling lip—and dauntless brow—
Fit for the world's strife, not for poet's dream-
ing :
And proud the lifting of thy stately head,
And the firm bearing of thy conscious tread.

Different from both ! Yet each succeeding claim,
I, that all other love had been forswearing,
Forthwith admitted, equal and the same ;
Nor injured either, by this love's comparing ;
Nor stole a fraction for the newer call—
But in the mother's heart, found room for all !

— *Mrs. Norton.*

MOTHER'S SONG.

DON'T grow old too fast, my sweet !
 Stay a little while
 In this pleasant baby-land,
 Sunned by mother's smile.

Grasp not with thy dimpled hands
 At the world outside ;
 They are still too rosy soft,
 Life too cold and wide.

Be not wistful, sweet blue eyes,
 Find your rest in mine,
 Which through life shall watchful be
 To keep all tears from thine.

Be not restless, little feet,
 Lie within my hand ;
 Far too round these tiny soles
 Yet to try to stand.

For awhile be mine alone,
 So helpless and so dear ;
 By and by thou must go forth.
 But now, sweet, slumber here.

BABY'S SHOES.

OH, those little, those little blue shoes !
Those shoes that no little feet use.
Oh, the price were high
That those shoes would buy,
Those little blue unused shoes !

For they hold the small shape of feet
That no more their mother's eyes meet,
That by God's good will,
Years since, grew still,
And ceased from their totter so sweet.

And oh, since that baby slept,
So hushed, how the mother has kept,
With a tearful pleasure,
That little dear treasure,
And o'er them thought and wept !

For they mind her for ever more
Of a patter along the floor ;
And blue eyes she sees
Look up from her knees
With the look that in life they wore.

As they lie before her there,
 There babbles from chair to chair
 A little sweet face
 That's a gleam in the place,
 With its little gold curls of hair.

Then oh, wonder not that her heart
 From all else would rather part
 Than those tiny blue shoes
 That no little feet use,
 And whose sight makes such fond tears start !

— *William Cox Bennett.*

THE MOTHER'S DREAM.

I'D a dream to-night
 As I fell asleep,
 Oh ! the touching sight
 Makes me still to weep :
 Of my little lad,
 Gone to leave me sad,
 Aye, the child I had,
 But was not to keep.

As in heaven high,
 I my child did seek,

There, in train, came by
Children fair and meek,
Each in lily white,
With a lamp alight ;
Each was clear to sight,
But they did not speak.

Then, a little sad,
Came my child in turn,
But the lamp he had,
Oh ! it did not burn ;
He, to clear my doubt,
Said, half-turned about,
" Your tears put it out ;
Mother, never mourn."

— *W. Barnes.*

TO GEORGE M——.

YES, I do love thee well, my child !
Albeit mine's a wandering mind ;
But never, darling, hast thou smiled
Or breathed a wish that did not find
A ready echo in my heart.
What hours I've held thee on my knee,

Thy little rosy lips apart !
 Or, when asleep, I've gazed on thee,
 And with old tunes sung thee to rest,
 Hugging thee closely on my bosom ;
 For thee my heart hath blest,
 My joy, my care, my blue-eyed blossom !
 — *Thomas Miller.*

WHY?

WHAT did the baby come for ?
 That was the question trite
 The neighbours asked of each other
 That stormy winter night.
 What was the need of children ?
 'Twas hard enough before
 To keep care out of the window, —
 The gray wolf from the door.

Out of the wintry barren,
 Over the sleeping town,
 Out of the cold, dark heaven
 Drifted the snow-flakes down.
 Within the low, old cottage
 Flickered the candle's flame
 In the dusk of the early dawning,
 But never an answer came.

What did the baby come for ?
A woman's heart could tell :
At touch of the tiny fingers,
Like to a fairy spell,
A heart that was hard with doubting,
A soul that was barred with sin,
Opened a tide from God's ocean,
The mother-love swept in.

What did the baby come for ?
A strong man's heart had grown,
Through poverty's constant grinding,
As hard as the nether stone.
Only a baby's prattle,
And yet, O wonderful song
That made a man's heart grow lighter,
Made a man's hands grow strong !

Was ever a spring or summer
That vanished on wings so fleet ?
Ah ! 'twas a joy to labour,
When living had grown so sweet !
Care never came near the window,
And poverty, gaunt and grim,
Never stepped over the threshold, —
There was no place for him.

— *Maud Moore.*

MY TREASURE.

FAIREST among children fair,
Is the baby that I bear
On my bosom, like a dove
Nestling in its home of love.

Oh, to me he's always fair ;
Winsome babe, my love and care.
But, when sleep with magic spell
Lures my babe where angels dwell,

Then, in rapture and amaze,
On his lovely face I gaze,
Lingering long beside the bed,
Stroking oft the silken head —

Pressing many a long fond kiss
On his lips, so thrilled with bliss,
That for very joy I weep,
Over baby, fast asleep.

Oh, how sweet my cup of life !
Happy mother, happy wife !
Naught can drain my cup of joy,
While my arms enfold my boy.

— *H. W. R.*

Love and Innocence.
From painting by L. Perrault.



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MOTHER AND CHILD.

THE wind blew wide the casement, and within —
It was the loveliest picture ! — a sweet child
Lay in its mother's arms, and drew its life,
In pauses, from the fountain, — the white round
Part shaded by loose tresses, soft and dark,
Concealing, but still showing, the fair realm
Of so much rapture, as green shadowing trees
With beauty shroud the brooklet. The red lips
Were parted, and the cheek upon the breast
Lay close, and, like the young leaf of the flower,
Wore the same colour, rich and warm and fresh : —
And such alone are beautiful. Its eye,
A full blue gem, most exquisitely set,
Looked archly on its world, — the little imp,
As if it knew even then that such a wreath
Were not for all : and with its playful hands
It drew aside the robe that hid its realm,
And peeped and laughed aloud, and so it laid
Its head upon the shrine of such pure joys,
And, laughing, slept. And while it slept, the tears
Of the sweet mother fell upon its cheek, —
Tears such as fall from April skies, and bring
The sunlight after. They were tears of joy ;
And the true heart of that young mother then

Grew lighter, and she sang unconsciously
 The silliest ballad-song that ever yet
 Subdued the nursery's voices, and brought sleep
 To fold her sabbath wings above its couch.

— *William Gilmore Simms.*

SLUMBER SONG.

THOU little child, with tender, clinging arms,
 Drop thy sweet head, my darling, down and rest
 Upon my shoulder, rest with all thy charms ;
 Be soothed and comforted, be loved and blessed.

Against thy silken, honey-coloured hair
 I lean a loving cheek, a mute caress ;
 Close, close I gather thee and kiss thy fair
 White eyelids, sleep so softly doth oppress.

Dear little face, that lies in calm content
 Within the gracious hollow that God made
 In every human shoulder, where He meant
 Some tired head for comfort should be laid !

Most like a heavy-folded rose thou art,
 In summer air reposing, warm and still.
 Dream thy sweet dreams upon my quiet heart ;
 I watch thy slumber ; naught shall do thee ill.

— *Celia Thaxter.*

BABYHOOD

PATERNITY.

A CLOUD came darkening up the west,
And as its awesome pall drew near,
It hushed the home with vague unrest,
And filled my heart with nameless fear.

I heard a rustle as of wings, —
And turning, saw Death's angel fill
The room. Then froze life's very springs
Within me, and my heart stood still.

The dreadful presence, in the gloom,
Bent o'er my love, — smiled, — and went by;
When from the stillness of the room
There faintly came — a little cry.

And lo ! from heaven an angel throng,
As on that old-time Christmas morn,
Took up anew their happy song,
“For unto you a child is born.”

—*James Terry White.*

A CRADLE SONG.

HUSH ! my dear, lie still and slumber ;
Holy angels guard thy bed !
Heavenly blessings without number
Gently falling on thy head.

Sleep, my babe ; thy food and raiment,
House and home, thy friends provide,
All without thy care or payment,
All thy wants are well supplied.

How much better thou'rt attended
Than the Son of God could be,
When from Heaven he descended,
And became a child like thee !

Soft and easy is thy cradle :
Coarse and hard thy Saviour lay,
When his birthplace was a stable,
And his softest bed was hay.

See the kindly shepherds round him,
Telling wonders from the sky !
Where they sought him, there they found him,
With his Virgin-mother by.

"Like this, Grannie!"
From painting by Maude Goodman.



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See the lovely babe a-dressing !
Lovely infant, how he smiled !
When he wept, the mother's blessing
Soothed and hushed the holy child.

Lo, he slumbers in his manger,
Where the hornèd oxen fed ;
Peace, my darling ! here's no danger,
Here's no ox a-near thy bed !

May'st thou live to know and fear him,
Trust and love him all thy days :
Then go dwell for ever near him ;
See his face, and sing his praise.

I could give thee thousand kisses,
Hoping what I most desire :
Not a mother's fondest wishes
Can to greater joys aspire.

— *Isaac Watts.*

TO A NEW-BORN INFANT.

THERE, on the nurse's lap, a new-born child,
We saw thee weep while all around thee
smiled ;
So live, that sinking in thy last long sleep,
Thou still may'st smile, while all around thee
weep.

— *Sir William Jones.*

BABY'S ANSWERS.

WHERE did you come from, baby dear?
Out of the everywhere into here.

Where did you get your eyes of blue?
Out of the sky as I came through.

Where did you get that little tear?
I found it waiting when I got here.

What makes your forehead so smooth and high?
A soft hand stroked it as I went by.

What makes your cheek like a warm white rose?
I saw something better than any one knows.

Whence that three-cornered smile of bliss?
Three angels at once gave me a kiss.

Where did you get this pearly ear?
God spoke, and it came out to hear.

How did they all just come to be you?
God thought about me, and so I grew.

But how did you come to us, you dear?
God thought about you, and so I am here.

— *George McDonald.*

A BABY RHYME.

SO new the kiss, so new the bliss
Of baby fingers tender —
A weight so warm upon the arm —
A sleepy breathing splendour !

Two hands closed fast, two lids downcast,
Eyes brown or blue — which, mother ?
A heart as white as flowers at night,
Moon-kissed, that kiss each other.

So white the earth grew at thy birth —
Thy tiny feet were whiter ;
So light the fall of snow o'er all —
Thy warm home-nest was lighter.

And over thee, all warm, I see
Two tear-bright eyes bend softly ;
And folded fast, upon thee cast
Are kisses falling softly.

Oh, tiny thing without a wing !
Oh, bird with song yet hidden !
Our guest, with glee we welcome thee,
To life's feast later bidden.

BABY MAY.

CHEEKS as soft as July peaches ;
Lips whose dewy scarlet teaches
Poppies paleness ; round large eyes
Ever great with new surprise ;
Minutes filled with shadeless gladness ;
Minutes just as brimmed with sadness ;
Happy smiles and wailing cries ;
Crows and laughs and tearful eyes ;
Lights and shadows, swifter born
Than on wind-swept Autumn corn ;
Ever some new tiny notion,
Making every limb all motion ;
Catchings up of legs and arms ;
Throwings back and small alarms ;
Clutching fingers ; straightening jerks ;
Twining feet whose each toe works ;
Kickings up and straining risings ;
Mother's ever new surprisings ;
Hands all wants and looks all wonder
At all things the heavens under ;
Tiny scorns of smiled reprovings
That have more of love than lovings ;
Mischiefs done with such a winning
Archness that we prize such sinning ;

Breakings dire of plates and glasses ;
Graspings small at all that passes ;
Pullings off of all that's able
To be caught from tray or table ;
Silences — small meditations
Deep as thoughts of cares for nations
Breaking into wisest speeches
In a tongue that nothing teaches ;
All the thoughts of whose possessing
Must be wooed to light by guessing ;
Slumbers — such sweet angel-seemings
That we'd ever have such dreamings ;
Till from sleep we see the breaking,
And we'd always have thee waking ;
Wealth for which we know no measure ;
Pleasure high above all pleasure ;
Gladness brimming over gladness ;
Joy in care ; delight in sadness ;
Loveliness beyond completeness ;
Sweetness distancing all sweetness ;
Beauty all that beauty may be ; —
That's May Bennett ; that's my baby.

— *William Cox Bennett.*

A SLEEPING CHILD.

WHITE lids pressing down
O'er the tired eyes,
In sleep's sweet embrace
My darling lies.

One little snowy hand
Dimpling her cheek,
Lips parted in a smile,
As if to speak.

Wavy locks have stolen
Gold from the sun ;
There's nothing so beautiful
As my sleeping one.

God has pressed a kiss
On the pure brow ;
Angels weave bright dreams
Over her now.

A CRADLE SONG.

SING it, Mother ! sing it low :
Deem it not an idle lay.
In the heart 'twill ebb and flow
All the lifelong way.

Sing it, Mother ! softly sing,
While he slumbers on thy knee ;
All that after-years may bring
Shall flow back to thee.

Sing it, Mother ! Love is strong
When the tears of manhood fall,
Echoes of thy cradle song
Shall its peace recall.

Sing it, Mother ! when its ear
Catcheth first the Voice Divine,
Dying, he may smile to hear
What he deemeth thine.

—*John B. Tabb.*

LULLABY.

COME to my arms, you bewildering elf !
 Let me gather you, body and soul, to
 myself ;

Bury your scintillant eyes and hair,
 And all the glory and grace you wear,
 From twinkling feet to golden crown ;
 Claspng you close to my bosom and heart,
 A thing of my holiest being a part,
 Crooning a song in olden rhyme,
 Tender and sweet as a vesper chime.

Sleep, baby boy ;
 The little birds rest,
 Downy and soft,
 In the mother-bird's nest ;
 The lambkins are safe
 In the shepherd's warm fold ;
 The dewdrops asleep
 In the buttercup's gold.

The violet nods
 To the daisy's dream ;
 The lily lies hushed
 On the lap of the stream ;

And holy and calm,
Like motherly eyes,
The stars look down
From the silent skies.

Sleep, baby boy,
My birdling, my flower,
My lily, my lambkin,
My dewdrop, my dower !
While heart against heart
Beats softly in time
To the murmuring flow
Of my tender old rhyme.
— *Mary Forrest.*

LOSS AND GAIN.

WHEN the baby died, we said,
With a sudden, secret dread :
“Death, be merciful, and pass ; —
Leave the other !” — but alas !

While we watched he waited there,
One foot on the golden stair,
One hand beckoning at the gate,
Till the home was desolate.

Friends say, "It is better so,
Clothed in innocence to go ;"
Say, to ease the parting pain,
That "your loss is but their gain."

Ah ! the parents think of this !
But remember more the kiss
From the little rose-red lips ;
And the print of finger-tips

Left upon the broken toy,
Will remind them how the boy
And his sister charmed the days
With their pretty, winsome ways.

Only time can give relief
To the weary, lonesome grief :
God's sweet minister of pain
Then shall sing of loss and gain.

— *Nora Perry.*

NO BABY IN THE HOUSE.

NO BABY in the house, I know,
'Tis far too nice and clean.
No toys, by careless fingers strewn,
Upon the floors are seen.

No finger-marks are on the panes,
No scratches on the chairs :
No wooden men set up in rows,
Or marshalled off in pairs ;
No little stockings to be darned,
All ragged at the toes ;
No pile of mending to be done,
Made up of baby-clothes ;
No little troubles to be soothed ;
No little hands to fold ;
No grimy fingers to be washed ;
No stories to be told ;
No tender kisses to be given ;
No nicknames, " Dove " and " Mouse ;"
No merry frolics after tea, —
No baby in the house.

— *Clara G. Dolliver.*

COMPENSATION.

I AM not a prosperous man ;
The ships I send to sea
Are apt to meet some strange defeat
Ere they come back to me.
And her eyes are dull with care,
And the castle that serves our prime

Is a poor affair to those in the air
We built in our courting time.

This morning, waking slow
To a sense of the coming day,
Of the life too mean, and the might
have been,
My coward heart gave way.
My heart, appalled, sank down,
But rose again with a leap
At our delight when at dead of night
Our babe laughed out in his sleep.

— *Eliza Sproat Turner.*

BABY SKIES.

WOULD you know the baby skies?
Baby's skies are mother's eyes.
Mother's eyes and smile together
Make the baby's pleasant weather.

Mother, keep your eyes from tears,
Keep your heart from foolish fears,
Keep your lips from dull complaining
Lest the baby think 'tis raining.

— *Mary C. Bartlett.*

Siesta.
From painting by P. Wagner.



SLEEPY MAN.

WHEN the sleepy man comes with the dust on
his eyes

(Oh, weary, my Dearie, so weary !)

He shuts up the earth, and he opens the skies.

(So hush-a-by, weary my Dearie !)

He smiles through his fingers, and shuts up the sun ;

(Oh, weary, my Dearie, so weary !)

The stars that he loves he lets out one by one.

(So hush-a-by, weary my Dearie !)

He comes from the castles of Drowsy-boy Town ;

(Oh, weary, my Dearie, so weary !)

At the touch of his hand the tired eyelids fall down.

(So hush-a-by, weary my Dearie !)

He comes with a murmur of dream in his wings

(Oh, weary, my Dearie, so weary !)

And whispers of mermaids and wonderful things.

(So hush-a-by, weary my Dearie !)

Then the top is a burden, the bugle a bane,

(Oh, weary, my Dearie, so weary !)

When one would be faring down Dream-a-way Lane,

(So hush-a-by, weary my Dearie !)

84 *IN THE SWEETNESS OF CHILDHOOD.*

When one would be wending in Lullaby Wherry
 (Oh, weary, my Dearie, so weary!)
To Sleepy Man's Castle by Comforting Ferry.
 (So hush-a-by, weary my Dearie!)

— *Charles G. D. Roberts.*

WHERE BABY JOY COMES FROM.

AS I sat by my study table,
 With my sermon strewing the floor,
My little sixteen-month darling
 Came full-sail through the study door.
He first bore away to the window,
 Then veered to the bright hearthstone;
But soon in the farthest corner
 Cast anchor all alone.

First he rattled the quills in my pen-box,
 And then with the carpet he played;
Then he washed his hands in the sunshine,
 And caught at the shadows they made.
One thing was as good as another,
 For each gave a new surprise:
And the light of his childish gladness
 Kept shining on out of his eyes.

As I wondered where all the joy came from,
This thought fell from heaven on me,
That when God and a babe are together,
A little fountain of glee
Must needs bubble up in the child's heart,
Because those waters are given,
And ever renewed by the joy tides
Of the great cheerful Heart in heaven.

I had quite forgotten my sermon,
And my baby upon the floor
Was tearing the papers to pieces
That were strewed from window to door ;
But I knew that the thought he gave me
Was more than his hands could destroy, —
For the love of the Father in heaven
Had come to me through my boy.

— *Samuel R. Calthrop.*

BABY MINE.

BABY mine, with the grave, grave face,
Where did you get that royal calm,
Too staid for joy, too still for grace ?
I bend as I kiss your pink, soft palm ;
Are you the first of a nobler race,
Baby mine ?

You come from the region of *long ago*,
 And gazing awhile where the seraphs dwell
 Has given your face a glory and a glow, —
 Of that brighter land have you aught to tell?
 I seem to have known it — I more would know,
 Baby mine.

Your calm blue eyes have a far-off reach :
 Look at me now with those wondrous eyes.
 Why are we doom'd to the gift of speech
 While you are silent and sweet and wise?
 You have much to learn — you have more to teach,
 Baby mine.
 — *Frederick Locker.*

ONLY.

ONLY a ray of light,
 But it makes the world so fair ;
 It wakes new beauty in the flowers,
 New music in the air.
 Only a heavy cloud,
 But the world is dull and gray ;
 The song is silent in the trees,
 The brightness passed away.

WHAT IS HOME WITHOUT A BABY. 87

Only a little life,
 So lately sent from heaven ;
Only a little child,
 Which God to us has given ;
Only a little voice,
 With its coo of soft delight,
But there is sunshine in the house,
 And baby is its light.

Only a broken toy,
 Only an empty cot,
Only a silent room,
 Where the little voice is not ;
Only a tiny grave
 In the daisy-sprinkled sod ;
But a heavy shadow on the house,
 For baby is with God. — *E. E. M.*

WHAT IS HOME WITHOUT A BABY.

WHAT is home without a baby,
 With each gentle, winning way ;
Sweet uplifted smiles inviting
 Fond caresses all the day ?
 Darling baby,
 Precious baby,
Give her kisses all the day.

Life is dull and duty pressing,
 Care brings pain and weariness ;
 But the baby's soft embracing
 Changes all our toil to bliss.
 Darling baby,
 Precious baby,
 Like a ray of sunshine is.

How we watch each fond endeavour
 After language, in her face ;
 Oh, what wealth of love we give her,
 As her tiny steps we trace.
 Darling baby,
 Precious baby,
 Adds to home a sweeter grace.

ONLY A BABY SMALL.

ONLY a baby small,
 Dropt from the skies ;
 Only a laughing face,
 Two sunny eyes ;
 Only two cherry lips,
 One chubby nose ;
 Only two little hands,
 Ten little toes.

Only a golden head,
Curly and soft ;
Only a tongue that wags
Loudly and oft ;
Only a little brain,
Empty of thought ;
Only a little heart,
Troubled with naught.

Only a tender flower,
Sent us to rear ;
Only a life to love
While we are here ;
Only a baby small,
Never at rest ;
Small, but how dear to us,
God knoweth best.

— *Matthias Barr.*

THE PLAYMATE HOURS.

DAWN lingers silent in the shade of night,
Till on the gloaming Baby's laughter rings.
Then smiling Day awakes, and open flings
Her golden doors, to speed the shining flight
Of restless hours, gay children of the light.

Each eager playfellow to Baby brings
 Some separate gift, — a flitting bird that sings
 With her ; a waving branch of berries bright ;
 A heap of rustling leaves ; each trifle cheers
 This joyous little life but just begun.
 No weary hour to her brings sighs or tears ;
 And when the shadows warn the loitering sun,
 With blossoms in her hands, untouched by fears,
 She softly falls asleep, and day is done.

— *Mrs. T. W. Higginson.*

CRADLE SONG.

THE winds are whispering over the sea,
 And the waves are listening smilingly, —
 They are telling tales of the shining sky,
 And the dusky lands they travel by.

They are telling tales they have often told, —
 Of faces new and feelings old,
 Of hope and fear, of love and hate,
 Of birth and death and human fate.

Of homes of joy and hearts of pain,
 Of storm and strife, and peace again,
 Of age and youth, of man and maid,
 And of baby mine, in the cradle laid.

The Soldiers Are Coming.
From painting by P. Wagner.



And the sun laughs down in his own kind way,
For the heart of the sun is as young as they ;
And the sea looks up as a loved one should, —
They are old ; they know it is good, all good.

You may feel the waves as the cradle swings,
And the air is stirred with the wind's soft wings,
And mother has heard from the sky and sea
That they send "sweet sleep and dreams" to thee.

Then hush ! my baby, gently rest
In the night's wide arms, on the earth's broad breast,
The sky above, beneath the sea,
And a greater than all to shelter thee.

—*Merle St. Croix Wright.*

LULLABY.

SWEET and low, sweet and low,
Wind of the western sea,
Low, low, breathe and blow,
Wind of the western sea !
Over the rolling waters go ;
Come from the dying moon and blow,
Blow him again to me ;
While my little one, while my pretty one, sleeps.

Sleep and rest, sleep and rest ;
 Father will come to thee soon.
 Rest, rest on mother's breast ;
 Father will come to thee soon.
 Father will come to his babe in the nest ;
 Silver sails all out of the west
 Under the silver moon ;
 Sleep, my little one, sleep, my pretty one, sleep.
 — *Alfred Tennyson.*

THE BABY.

ANOTHER little wave
 Upon the sea of life ;
 Another soul to save
 Amid its toil and strife.

Two more little feet
 To walk the dusty road ;
 To choose where two paths meet,
 The narrow and the broad.

Two more little hands
 To work for good or ill ;
 Two more little eyes,
 Another little will.

Another heart to love,
Receiving love again ;
And so the Baby came,
A thing of joy and pain.

— *Mrs. Lucy E. Akerman.*

BABY.

DIMPLED and flushed and dewy pink he lies,
Crumpled and tossed and lapt in snowy
bands ;

Aimlessly reaching with his tiny hands,
Lifting in wondering gaze his great blue eyes.
Sweet pouting lips, parted by breathing sighs ;
Soft cheeks, warm tinted as from tropic lands ;
Framed with brown hair in shining silken
strands, —

All fair, all pure, a sunbeam from the skies !
O perfect innocence ! O soul enshrined
In blissful ignorance of good or ill,

By never gale of idle passion crossed !
Although thou art no alien from thy kind,
Though pain and death may take thee captive still,
Through sin, at least, thine Eden is not lost.

— *Elaine Goodale.*

CRADLE SONG.

WHAT does little birdie say
 In her nest at peep of day?
 Let me fly, says little birdie,
 Mother, let me fly away.
 Birdie, rest a little longer,
 Till the little wings are stronger,
 So she rests a little longer,
 Then she flies away.

What does little baby say,
 In her bed at peep of day?
 Baby says, like little birdie,
 Let me rise and fly away.
 Baby sleeps a little longer,
 Till the little limbs are stronger.
 If she sleeps a little longer,
 Baby too shall fly away.

— *Alfred, Lord Tennyson.*

CHILDHOOD

TO A CHILD

EMBRACING HIS MOTHER.

LOVE thy mother, little one !
Kiss and clasp her neck again, —
Hereafter she may have a son
Will kiss and clasp her neck in vain.
Love thy mother, little one !

Gaze upon her living eyes,
And mirror back her love for thee, —
Hereafter thou mayst shudder sighs
To meet them when they cannot see.
Gaze upon her living eyes !

Press her lips the while they glow
With love that they have often told, —
Hereafter thou mayst press in woe,
And kiss them till thine own are cold.
Press her lips the while they glow !

Oh, revere her raven hair !
Although it be not silver-gray —
Too early Death, led on by Care,
May snatch save one dear lock away.
Oh, revere her raven hair !

Pray for her at eve and morn,
 That Heaven may long the stroke defer;
 For thou mayst live the hour forlorn
 When thou wilt ask to die with her.
 Pray for her at eve and morn !

— *Thomas Hood.*

CHILDREN.

CHILDREN are what mothers are.
 No fondest father's fondest care
 Can fashion so the infant heart
 As those creative beams that dart,
 With all their hopes and fears, upon
 The cradle of a sleeping son.

His startled eyes with wonder see
 A father near him on his knee,
 Who wishes all the while to trace
 The mother in his future face;
 But 'tis to her alone uprise
 His wakening arms; to her those eyes
 Open with joy and not surprise.

— *Walter Savage Landor.*

THE HAPPY CHILD.

TOYS and treats and pleasures pass
Like a shadow in a glass,
Like the smoke that mounts on high,
Like a noonday's butterfly.

Quick they come and quick they end,
Like the money that I spend ;
Some to-day, to-morrow more,
Short, like those that went before.

Mother, fold me to your knees !
How much should I care for these
Little joys that come and go
If you did not love me so ?

Father, now my prayer is said,
Lay your hand upon my head !
Pleasures pass from day to day,
But I know that love will stay.

While I sleep it will be near ;
I shall wake and find it here ;
I shall feel it in the air,
When I say my morning prayer.

And when things are sad or wrong,
 Then I know that love is strong ;
 When I ache or when I weep,
 Then I know that love is deep.

Love is old and love is new,
 You love me and I love you ;
 And the Lord who made it thus,
 Did it in His love for us.

— *William Brighty Rand.*

THE RECONCILIATION.

AS through the land at eve we went,
 And plucked the ripened ears,
 We fell out, my wife and I, —
 Oh, we fell out, I know not why,
 And kissed again with tears.

For when we came where lies the child
 We lost in other years,
 There above the little grave,
 Oh, there above the little grave,
 We kissed again with tears.

— *Alfred Tennyson.*

In the Nursery.
From painting by R. Potzelberger.



LITTLE BROWN HANDS.

THEY drive home the cows from the pasture,
Up through the long shady lane,
Where the quail whistles loud in the wheat-fields,
That are yellow with ripening grain.
They find, in the thick waving grasses,
Where the scarlet-lipped strawberry grows ;
They gather the earliest snowdrops,
And the first crimson buds of the rose.

They toss the new hay in the meadow ;
They gather the elder-bloom white ;
They find where the dusky grapes purple
In the soft-tinted October light.
They know where the apples hang ripest,
And are sweeter than Italy's wines ;
They know where the fruit hangs the thickest
On the long, thorny blackberry-vines.

They gather the delicate seaweeds,
And build tiny castles of sand ;
They pick up the beautiful sea-shells, —
Fairy barks that have drifted to land.
They wave from the tall, rocking tree-tops
Where the oriole's hammock-nest swings ;

And at night-time are folded in slumber
 By a song that a fond mother sings.

Those who toil bravely are strongest ;
 The humble and poor become great ;
 And so from these brown-handed children
 Shall grow mighty rulers of state.
 The pen of the author and statesman, —
 The noble and wise of the land, —
 The sword, and the chisel, and palette,
 Shall be held in the little brown hand.

— *M. H. Krout.*

THE TOYS.

MY little son, who looked from thoughtful eyes
 And moved and spoke in quiet, grown-up
 wise,

Having my law the seventh time disobeyed,
 I struck him and dismissed
 With hard words and unkissed, —
 His mother, who was patient, being dead.
 Then, fearing lest his grief should hinder sleep,
 I visited his bed ;
 But found him slumbering deep,
 With darkened eyelids, and their lashes yet

From his late sobbing wet.
And I, with moan,
Kissing away his tears, left others of my own ;
For on a table beside his head,
He had put within his reach,
A box of counters, and a red-veined stone,
A piece of glass, abraded by the beach,
And six or seven shells,
A bottle with blue-bells,
And two French copper coins, ranged there with
careful art
To comfort his sad heart.
So when that night I prayed
To God, I wept and said :
Ah ! when at last we lie with tranced breath,
Not vexing thee in death,
And Thou rememberest of what toys
We made our joys,
How weakly understood
Thy great commanded good,
Then, fatherly, not less
Than I whom Thou hast molded from the clay,
Thou'lt leave thy wrath and say :
"I will be sorry for their childishness."

— *Coventry Patmore.*

A CHILD PRAYING.

FOLD thy little hands in prayer,
 Bow down at thy mother's knee,
 Now thy sunny face is fair,
 Shining through thine auburn hair;
 Thine eyes are passion-free;
 And pleasant thoughts, like garlands, bind thee
 Unto thy home, yet grief may find thee —
 Then pray, child, pray!

Now thy young heart, like a bird,
 Warbles in its summer nest;
 No evil thought, no unkind word,
 No chilling autumn winds have stirred
 The beauty of thy rest;
 But winter hastens, and decay
 Shall waste thy verdant home away —
 Then pray, child, pray!

Thy bosom is a house of glee,
 With gladness harping at the door;
 While ever, with a joyous shout,
 Hope, the May queen, dances out,
 Her lips with music running o'er;

But Time those strings of joy will sever,
And hope will not dance on for ever —
Then pray, child, pray !

Now, thy mother's arm is spread
Beneath thy pillow in the night ;
And loving feet creep round thy bed,
And o'er thy quiet face is shed
The taper's darkened light ;
But that fond arm will pass away,
By thee no more those feet will stay —
Then pray, child, pray !
— *Robert Aris Willmott.*

A LITTLE CHILD'S HYMN.

FOR NIGHT AND MORNING.

THOU that once, on mother's knee,
Wast a little one like me,
When I wake or go to bed
Lay thy hands about my head :
Let me feel thee very near,
Jesus Christ, our Saviour dear.

Be beside me in the light,
Close by me through all the night ;

Make me gentle, kind, and true,
 Do what mother bids me do ;
 Help and cheer me when I fret,
 And forgive when I forget.

Once wast thou in cradle laid,
 Baby bright in manger-shade,
 With the oxen and the cows,
 And the lambs, outside the house :
 Now thou art above the sky :
 Canst thou hear a baby cry ?

Thou art nearer when we pray,
 Since thou art so far away ;
 Thou my little hymn wilt hear,
 Jesus Christ, our Saviour dear,
 Thou that once, on mother's knee,
 Wast a little one like me.

— *Francis Turner Palgrave.*

MY CHILD.

I CANNOT make him dead !
 His fair sunshiny head
 Is ever bounding round my study chair ;
 Yet when my eyes, now dim
 With tears, I turn to him,
 The vision vanishes — he is not there !

I walk my parlour floor,
And, through the open door,
I hear a footfall on the chamber stair ;
I'm stepping toward the hall
To give the boy a call ;
And then bethink me that — he is not there !

I thread the crowded street ;
A satchelled lad I meet,
With the same beaming eyes and coloured hair ;
And, as he's running by,
Follow him with my eye,
Scarcely believing that — he is not there !

I know his face is hid
Under the coffin lid ;
Closed are his eyes ; cold is his forehead fair ;
My hand that marble felt ;
O'er it in prayer I knelt ;
Yet my heart whispers that — he is not there !

I cannot make him dead !
When passing by the bed
So long watched over with parental care,
My spirit and my eye
Seek him inquiringly,
Before the thought comes that — he is not there !

When, at the cool, gray break
 Of day, from sleep I wake,
 With my first breathing of the morning air
 My soul goes up with joy,
 To Him who gave my boy ;
 Then comes the sad thought that — he is not there !

When at the day's calm close,
 Before we seek repose,
 I'm with his mother, offering up our prayer,
 Whate'er I may be saying,
 I am in spirit praying
 For our boy's spirit, though — he is not there !

Not there ? Where, then, is he ?
 The form I used to see
 Was but the raiment that he used to wear.
 The grave, that now doth press
 Upon that cast-off dress,
 Is but his wardrobe locked ; — he is not there.

He lives ! In all the past
 He lives ; nor, to the last,
 Of seeing him again will I despair,
 In dreams I see him now ;
 And on his angel brow
 I see it written, " Thou shalt see me there ! "

Yes, we all live to God !
Father, thy chastening rod
So help us, thine afflicted ones, to bear,
That, in the spirit land,
Meeting at thy right hand,
'Twill be our heaven to find that — he is there !
— *John Pierpont.*

MY BAD LITTLE BOY.

DID you ever see him, my bad little boy,
Down on the sands by the sea ?
That is his picture, — my boy's own self, —
With his big eyes smiling at me !
With his hands in his pockets, his hat awry,
And his face all covered with tan ;
Oh, he was a bad little boy — my boy,
Who never will be a man !

He kept me busy from morn till night ;
I lived in a babel of noise !
He would romp and play in the roughest way,
After the fashion of boys.
He spilled my ink and he broke my pen, —
I had never a chance to write,
Till the mystical music of winds and waves
Had lulled him to sleep at night.

But once in awhile he would come and lay
 His curly head on my knee,
 And watch the Sun King going down
 To his kingdom under the sea.
 And talk in his odd little way of things
 Too deep for my duller ken,
 After the fashion of some little boys —
 Boys who will never be men.

Alas and alas for my bad little boy !
 It happened one summer day
 That the light went out of the tired eyes,
 And the little feet lagged on the way.
 And just as the sun was going down
 To his kingdom under the sea,
 The angels came for my bad little boy
 And took him away from me.

There is quiet now when I want to write,
 There is never a toy on the floor,
 Nobody teases the cross old cat,
 Nobody pounds on the door.
 Nobody loses or breaks my pens,
 Nobody spills my ink ;
 I have plenty of time to read and work,
 I have too much time to think.

And I think, as I sit here alone to-night
 In the shadowy silence and gloom,
 I would give the wealth of the world to see
 My bad little boy in the room ;
 To hear the rollicking ring of his laugh,
 To see him among his toys,
 Or playing at leap-frog over the chairs,
 After the fashion of boys.

I would give the world — for I miss him so —
 To have him with me again !
 My boy, who has entered the silent ranks
 Of the boys who will never be men.
 And I think if an angel looked down to see,
 His song would lose some of its joy,
 For all that was dearest in life to me
 Is gone with my bad little boy.

— *Cincinnati Enquirer.*

THAT BOY.

IS the house turned topsy turvy ?
 Does it ring from street to roof ?
 Will the racket still continue,
 Spite of all your mild reproof ?
 Are you often in a flutter ?
 Are you sometimes thrilled with joy ?
 Then I have my grave suspicions
 That you have at home — that Boy.

Are your walls and tables hammered?
 Are your nerves and ink upset?
 Have two eyes, so bright and roguish,
 Made you every care forget?
 Have your garden beds a prowler
 Who delights but to destroy?
 These are well-known indications
 That you have at home — that Boy.

Have you seen him playing circus
 With his head upon the mat,
 And his heels in mid-air twinkling —
 For his audience, the cat?
 Did you ever stop to listen,
 When his merry pranks annoy, —
 Listen to a voice that whispers,
 You were once just like — that Boy?

Have you heard of broken windows,
 And with nobody to blame?
 Have you seen a trousered urchin
 Quite unconscious of the same?
 Do you love a teasing mixture
 Of perplexity and joy?
 You may have a dozen daughters,
 But I know you've got — that Boy.

THE CHILD'S FIRST GRIEF.

“OH ! call my brother back to me !
I cannot play alone ;
The summer comes with flower and bee —
Where is my brother gone ?

“The butterfly is glancing bright
Across the sunbeam's track ;
I care not now to chase its flight —
Oh ! call my brother back !

“The flowers run wild — the flowers we sow'd
Around our garden tree ;
Our vine is drooping with its load —
Oh ! call him back to me !”

“He could not hear thy voice, fair child,
He may not come to thee ;
The face that once like spring-time smiled,
On earth no more thou'lt see.

“A rose's brief, bright life of joy,
Such unto him was given ;
Go — thou must play alone, my boy !
Thy brother is in heaven !”

“And has he left his birds and flowers,
 And must I call in vain?
 And, through the long, long, summer hours,
 Will he not come again?

“And by the brook, and in the glade,
 Are all our wanderings o’er?
 Oh, while my brother with me played,
 Would I had loved him more!”

— *Felicia Hemans.*

TO A CHILD.

WHOSE imp art thou, with dimpled cheek,
 And curly pate, and merry eye,
 And arm and shoulder round and sleek,
 And soft and fair? — thou urchin sly!

What boots it who with sweet caresses
 First called thee his, — or squire or hind?
 Since thou in every wight that passes,
 Dost now a friendly playmate find.

Thy downcast glances, grave, but cunning,
 As fringed eyelids rise and fall;
 Thy shyness, swiftly from me running,
 Is infantine coquetry all.

But far afield thou hast not flown ;
With mocks, and threats, half-lisp'd, half-spoken.
I feel thee pulling at my gown,
Of right good will thy simple token.

And thou must laugh and wrestle too,
A mimic warfare with me waging ;
To make, as wily lovers do,
Thy after kindness more engaging.

The wilding rose, sweet as thyself,
And new-cropt daisies are thy treasure ;
I'd gladly part with worldly pelf
To taste again thy youthful pleasure.

But yet, for all thy merry look,
Thy frisks and wiles, the time is coming
When thou shalt sit in cheerless nook,
The weary spell or horn-book thumbing.

Well ; let it be ! — through weal and woe,
Thou know'st not now thy future range ;
Life is a motley, shifting show,
And thou a thing of hope and change.

—*Joanna Baillie.*

TO THE DAUGHTER OF A FRIEND.

I PRAY thee, by thy mother's face,
 And by her look, and by her eye,
 By every decent matron grace
 That hover'd round the resting-place
 Where thy young head did lie ;
 And by the voice that soothed thine ear,
 The hymn, the smile, the sigh, the tear,
 That match'd thy changeful mood ;
 By every prayer thy mother taught,
 By every blessing that she sought,
 I pray thee to be good.

Is not the nestling, when it wakes,
 Its eye upon the wood around,
 And on its new-fledged pinions takes
 Its taste of leaves, and boughs, and brakes —
 Of motion, sight, and sound, —
 Is it not like the parent ? Then
 Be like thy mother, child, and when
 Thy wing is bold and strong, —
 As pure and steady be thy light,
 As high and heavenly be thy flight,
 As holy be thy song.

— *John G. C. Brainard.*

THE COUNTRY CHILD.

WITH mingled trembling and delight,
And slowly falling feet,
A little country maiden now
Is passing down the street :
A country child, — I know it by
Her timid air, her wondering eye.

The sunlight warm has kissed her brow,
And tinged her cheek with brown ;
The odour of the violets
Comes with her to the town ;
We almost guess the woodland place
Where she has dwelt, from her sweet face !

We almost read her inner thoughts,
Through her large, wistful eyes ;
How bright to her the city seems,
How much like Paradise,
As Nature's child, with bounding heart,
Looks, for the first glad time, on Art !

The merchant, in his storehouse door,
Smiles as she passes by ;

The labourer pauses in his work,
To watch her, with a sigh :
Where'er she goes, she wakens dreams
Of shady nooks and rippling streams.

She seems to bring the country here, —
Its birds, its flowers, its dew ;
And slowly, as amid the throng,
She passes from our view,
We watch her sadly, as we might
Some pleasant landscape fade from sight.

Ah, well ! we would not keep her here,
These dusty streets to roam, —
So fair a flower should open with
The daisy buds at home ;
'Mid primrose stars, as sweet and wild,
As she will be, — dear woodland child !

— *Marian Douglas.*

THE OPEN WINDOW.

THE old house by the lindens
Stood silent in the shade,
And on the gravelled pathway
The light and shadow played.

I saw the nursery windows
Wide open to the air,
But the faces of the children,
They were no longer there.

The large Newfoundland house-dog
Was standing by the door ;
He looked for his little playmates,
Who would return no more.

They walked not under the lindens,
They played not in the hall ;
But shadow, and silence, and sadness
Were hanging over all.

The birds sang in the branches,
With sweet familiar tone ;
But the voices of the children
Will be heard in dreams alone !

And the boy that walked beside me,
 He could not understand
 Why closer in mine, ah ! closer,
 I pressed his warm, soft hand !

— *Henry Wadsworth Longfellow.*

GIRLHOOD.

AN exquisite incompleteness, blossom fore-
 shadowing fruit ;

A sketch faint in its beauty, with promise of
 future worth ;

A plant with some leaves unfolded, and the rest
 asleep at its root,

To deck with their future sweetness the fairest
 thing on the earth.

Womanhood, wifehood, motherhood — each a pos-
 sible thing,

Dimly seen through the silence that lies between
 then and now ;

Something of each and all has woven a magic ring,
 Linking the three together in glory on girlhood's
 brow.

— *Anonymous.*



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TO A CHILD.

DEAR child ! whom sleep can hardly tame,
As live and beautiful as flame,
Thou glancest round my graver hours
As if thy crown of wild-wood flowers
Were not by mortal forehead worn,
But on the summer breeze were borne,
Or on a mountain streamlet's waves,
Came glistening down from dreamy caves.

With bright round cheek, amid whose glow
Delight and wonder come and go,
And eyes whose inward meanings play,
Congenial with the light of day,
And brow so calm, a home for thought,
Before he knows his dwelling wrought ;
Though wise indeed thou seemest not,
Thou brightenest well the wise man's lot.

That shout proclaims the undoubting mind,
That laughter leaves no ache behind ;
And in thy look and dance of glee,
Unforced, unthought of, simply free,

How weak the schoolman's formal art
Thy soul and body's bliss to part !
I hail the childhood's very lord,
In gaze and glance, in voice and word.

In spite of all foreboding fear,
A thing thou art of present cheer ;
And thus to be beloved and known
As is a rushy fountain's tone,
As is the forest's leafy shade,
Or blackbird's hidden serenade :
Thou art a flash that lights the whole ;
A gush from nature's vernal soul.

And yet, dear child ! within thee lives
A power that deeper feeling gives,
That makes thee more than light or air,
Than all things sweet and all things fair ;
And sweet and fair as aught may be,
Diviner life belongs to thee,
For mid thine aimless joys began
The perfect heart and will of man.

Thus what thou art foreshows to me
How greater far thou soon shalt be ;
And while amid thy garlands blow
The winds that warbling come and go,

Ever within not loud but clear
Prophetic murmur fills the ear,
And says that every human birth
Anew discloses God to earth.

—*John Sterling.*

MY GOOD-FOR-NOTHING.

“**W**HAT are you good for, my brave little man ?
Answer that question for me, if you can, - -
You, with your fingers as white as a nun, —
You, with your ringlets as bright as the sun.
All the day long, with your busy contriving,
Into all mischief and fun you are driving ;
See if your wise little noddle can tell
What you are good for. Now ponder it well.”

Over the carpet the dear little feet
Came with a patter to climb on my seat ;
Two merry eyes, full of frolic and glee,
Under their lashes looked up unto me ;
Two little hands, pressed soft on my face,
Drew me down close in a loving embrace ;
Two rosy lips gave the answer so true,
“ Good to love you, mamma, — good to love you.”

— *Emily Huntington Miller.*

UNDER MY WINDOW.

UNDER my window, under my window,
 All in the midsummer weather,
 Three little girls, with fluttering curls,
 Flit to and fro together : —
 There's Bell with her bonnet of satin sheen,
 And Maud with her mantle of silver-green,
 And Kate with her scarlet feather.

Under my window, under my window,
 Leaning stealthily over,
 Merry and clear, the voice I hear
 Of each glad-hearted rover.
 Ah ! sly little Kate, she steals my roses,
 And Maud and Bell twine wreaths and
 posies,
 As merry as bees in clover.

Under my window, under my window,
 In the blue midsummer weather,
 Stealing slow, on a hushed tiptoe,
 I catch them all together : —
 Bell with her bonnet of satin sheen,
 And Maud with her mantle of silver-green,
 And Kate with the scarlet feather.

Under my window, under my window,
And off through the orchard closes ;
While Maud she flouts, and Bell she pouts,
They scamper, and drop their posies ;
But dear little Kate takes naught amiss,
And leaps in my arms with a loving kiss,
And I give her all my roses.

— *T. Westwood.*

FATHER IS COMING.

THE clock is on the stroke of six,
The father's work is done ;
Sweep up the hearth and mend the fire,
And put the kettle on !
The wild night-wind is blowing cold,
'Tis dreary crossing o'er the wold.

He's crossing o'er the wold apace ;
He's stronger than the storm ;
He does not feel the cold, not he,
His heart it is too warm :
For father's heart is stout and true
As ever human bosom knew.

He makes all toil, all hardship light ;
Would all men were the same, —
So ready to be pleased, so kind,
So very slow to blame !
Folks need not be unkind, austere,
For Love hath readier will than fear !

And we'll do all that father likes,
His wishes are so few !
Would they were more ! that every hour
Some wish of his I knew !
I'm sure it makes a happy day,
When I can please him any way.

I know he's coming by this sign,
The baby's almost wild ;
See how he laughs, and crows, and stares ; —
Heaven bless the merry child !
He's father's self in face and limb,
And father's heart is strong in him.

Hark ! hark ! I hear his footsteps now —
He's through the garden gate ;
Run, little Bess, and ope the door,
And do not let him wait !
Shout, baby, shout, and clap thy hands !
For father on the threshold stands.

— *Mary Howitt.*

THE NIGHT OUR DARLING DIED.

I'M thinking of an evening, a weary time ago,
When the bitter winds of sorrow about our
hearth did blow,—
When a shadow settled darkly where sunshine erst
did bide,—
Of the mystery of life and death, the night our
darling died.

'Twas a night in drear November; the spirits of
the breeze
Were holding rout and revel amid the leafless trees;
They tapped, with shivering fingers, at our pleasant
fireside,
But we heeded not their presence the night our
darling died.

She was but a child, a wee one. Six happy sum-
mers shed
Their meed of golden beauty upon her little head;
Six years of bliss unclouded in melody did glide,
Ere God sent down the angels the night our darling
died.

We watched the fitful brightness, the mournful look
of pain,
And hope would light in flashes, or sadly sink
again ;
We saw the death-mists gather our star of life to
hide,
Yet the fount of tears was frozen, the night our
darling died.

She moaned a word of sweetness, a little word of
love,
And a smile shone for a moment, reflected from
above ;
Then the waiting ones enclasped her in their
downy pinions wide,
And away, away they bore her, our darling and our
pride.

There was rustling of bright pinions, there were
seraph murmurs sweet,
And the shadowed room was holy with the tread of
angel-feet ;
It had been the gate of heaven to a spirit purified :
But we knew not, and we cared not, the night our
darling died.

Butterflies.

From painting by Kate Perugini.



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We could only touch the forehead, so ivory-veined
and chill;
We could only part the ringlets in childish beauty
still;
We could only fold the white hands on the strangely
silent breast;
We could only see the mortal, — the soul had gone
to rest.

There are times when two worlds, meeting, clasp
with a golden band,
And the mourner standeth closest to the radiant
Betterland:
And, though we thought not of it, bright Heaven
was at our side
In the hours of weary watching, that night our
darling died.

— *Margaret Elizabeth Sangster.*

RECOLLECTIONS OF CHILDHOOD

SONNET TO MY MOTHER.

AND canst thou, Mother, for a moment think
That we, thy children, when old age shall
shed

Its blanching honours on thy weary head,
Could from our best of duties ever shrink?
Sooner the sun from his high sphere should sink
Than we, ungrateful, leave thee in that day,
To pine in solitude thy life away,
Or shun thee, tottering on the grave's cold brink.
Banish the thought! — where'er our steps may roam,
O'er smiling plains, or wastes without a tree,
Still will fond memory point our hearts to thee,
And paint the pleasures of thy peaceful home;
While duty bids us all thy griefs assuage,
And smooth the pillow of thy sinking age.

— *Henry Kirke White.*

IT NEVER COMES AGAIN.

THERE are gains for all our losses,
There are balms for all our pain,
But when youth, the dream, departs,
It takes something from our hearts,
And it never comes again.

We are stronger, and are better,
 Under manhood's sterner reign;
 Still we feel that something sweet
 Followed youth, with flying feet,
 And will never come again.

Something beautiful is vanished,
 And we sigh for it in vain;
 We behold it everywhere,
 On the earth, and in the air,
 But it never comes again.

— *Richard Henry Stoddard.*

TO MY MOTHER.

MY mother! — Manhood's anxious brow
 And sterner cares have long been mine;
 Yet turn I to thee fondly now,
 As when upon thy bosom's shrine
 My infant griefs were gently hushed to rest,
 And thy low-whispered prayers my slumber bless'd.

I never call that gentle name,
 My mother! but I am again
 E'en as a child; the very same
 That prattled at thy knee; and fain

Samuel Peckham.
Engraving by B. Peckham.



Would I forget, in momentary joy,
That I no more can be thy happy boy ;—

The artless boy, to whom thy smile
Was sunshine, and thy frown sad night,
(Though rare that frown, and brief the while
It veiled from me thy loving light ;)
For well-conn'd task, ambition's highest bliss,
To win from thine approving lips a kiss.

I've loved through foreign lands to roam,
And gazed o'er many a classic scene ;
Yet would the thought of that dear home,
Which once was ours, oft intervene,
And bid me close again my weary eye
To think of thee, and those sweet days gone by.

That pleasant home of fruits and flowers,
Where, by the Hudson's verdant side,
My sisters wove their jasmine bowers,
And he we loved at eventide
Would hastening come from distant toil, to bless
Thine and his children's radiant happiness.

Alas, the change ! the rattling car
On flint-paved streets profanes the spot

Where, o'er the sod, we sow'd the Star
 Of Bethlehem and Forget-me-not.
 Oh, woe to Mammon's desolating reign !
 We ne'er shall find on earth a home again !

I've pored o'er many a yellow page
 Of ancient wisdom, and have won,
 Perchance, a scholar's name — but sage
 Or bard have never taught thy son
 Lessons so dear, so fraught with holy truth,
 As those his mother's faith shed on his youth.

If, by the Saviour's grace made meet,
 My God will own my life and love,
 Methinks, when singing at his feet,
 Amid the ransom'd throng above,
 Thy name upon my glowing lips shall be,
 And I will bless that grace for heaven and thee.

For thee and heaven ; for thou didst tread
 The way that leads me heavenward, and
 My often wayward footsteps led
 In the same path with patient hand ;
 And when I wander'd far, thy earnest call
 Restored my soul from sin's deceitful thrall.

I have been blessed with other ties,
Fond ties and true, yet never deem
That I the less thy fondness prize ;
No, mother ! in my warmest dream
Of answer'd passion, through this heart of mine
One chord will vibrate to no name but thine.

Mother ! thy name is widow — well
I know no love of mine can fill
The waste place of thy heart, or dwell
Within one sacred recess ; still
Lean on the faithful bosom of thy son,
My parent, thou art mine, my only one !
— *George W. Bethune.*

MY MOTHER'S BIBLE.

THIS book is all that's left me now, —
Tears will unbidden start, —
With faltering lip and throbbing brow
I press it to my heart.
For many generations past
Here is our family tree ;
My mother's hands this Bible clasped,
She, dying, gave it me.

Ah ! well do I remember those
Whose names these records bear ;
Who round the hearthstone used to close,
After the evening prayer,
And speak of what these pages said
In tones my heart would thrill !
Though they are with the silent dead,
Here are they living still !

My father read this holy book
To brothers, sisters, dear ;
How calm was my poor mother's look,
Who loved God's word to hear !
Her angel face, — I see it yet !
What thronging memories come !
Again that little group is met
Within the halls of home !

Thou truest friend man ever knew,
Thy constancy I've tried ;
When all were false, I found thee true,
My counsellor and guide.
The mines of earth no treasures give
That could this volume buy ;
In teaching me the way to live,
It taught me how to die !

— *George Perkins Morris.*

BOYHOOD.

AH, then how sweetly closed those crowded
days!

The minutes parting one by one like rays

That fade upon a summer's eve.

But oh! what charm, or magic numbers

Can give me back the gentle slumbers

Those weary, happy days did leave?

When by my bed I saw my mother kneel,

And with her blessing took her nightly kiss;

Whatever Time destroys, he cannot this —

E'en now that nameless kiss I feel.

— *Washington Allston.*

I REMEMBER, I REMEMBER.

I REMEMBER, I remember

The house where I was born,

The little window where the sun

Came peeping in at morn;

He never came a wink too soon,

Nor brought too long a day;

But now, I often wish the night

Had borne my breath away!

I remember, I remember
The roses, red and white,
The violets, and the lily-cups —
Those flowers made of light !
The lilacs where the robin built,
And where my brother set
The laburnum on his birth-day, —
The tree is living yet.

I remember, I remember
Where I was used to swing,
And thought the air must rush as fresh
To swallows on the wing ;
My spirit flew in feathers then,
That is so heavy now,
And summer pool could hardly cool
The fever on my brow !

I remember, I remember
The fir-trees dark and high ;
I used to think their slender tops
Were close against the sky.
It was a childish ignorance,
But now 'tis little joy
To know that I'm farther off from Heaven
Than when I was a boy.

— *Thomas Hood.*

ROCK ME TO SLEEP.

BACKWARD, — turn backward, O Time! in
your flight:

Make me a child again just for to-night!
Mother, come back from that echoless shore;
Take me again to your heart as of yore;
Kiss from my forehead the furrows of care;
Smooth the few silver threads out of my hair;
Over my slumbers your loving watch keep;
Rock me to sleep, mother, rock me to sleep!

Backward, flow backward, O tide of the years!
I am so weary of toils and of tears, —
Toil without recompense, tears all in vain;
Take them, and give me my childhood again!
I have grown weary of dust and decay;
Weary of flinging my soul-wealth away;
Weary of sowing for others to reap;
Rock me to sleep again, rock me to sleep!

Over my heart in the days that are flown,
No love like mother-love ever has shone;
No other worship abides and endures,
Faithful, unselfish, and patient, like yours.

None like a mother can charm away pain
 From the sick soul and the world-weary brain ;
 Slumber's soft calm o'er my heavy lids creep :
 Rock me to sleep, mother, rock me to sleep !

Come, let your brown hair, just lighted with gold,
 Fall on your shoulders again as of old ;
 Let it fall over my forehead to-night,
 Shading my faint eyes away from the light ;
 For, with its sunny-edged shadows once more,
 Haply will throng the sweet visions of yore.
 Lovingly, softly, its bright billows sweep ;
 Rock me to sleep, mother, rock me to sleep.

Clasped to your arms in a loving embrace,
 With your light lashes just sweeping my face,
 Never hereafter to wake or to weep,
 Rock me to sleep, mother, rock me to sleep !

— *Elizabeth Akers.*

OUR CHILDHOOD'S HOME.

THERE is one spot on all the earth,
 Where'er in after life we rove,
 To which the heart will ever turn
 With an unchanging, deathless love.

THE
FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION
UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE



Luisella.

From painting by L. Knaus



Seas may perchance roll far between,
To distant lands the feet may roam,
But memory turns with yearning back
To it, our loved, our childhood's home.

Our childhood's home — who can forget
The many happy, happy years
Spent there when all the world seemed bright,
And all unknown were cares and tears?
The morning sun beamed brightly down
On tranquil brows, and never care
Had traced a line, nor sorrow stamped
Its desolating impress there.

But swiftly flew the summer hours
With laugh and jest and guileless song,
And in a pathway strewn with flowers
We sped our happy way along;
We revelled in a sea of love, —
A perfect Eden of delight;
And years flew on and brought no change,
For all was pure and all was bright.

How different now! No more we see
The pleasant home we loved so well;
No more we hear in silvery tones
The simple song of evening swell.

We miss the father's kind caress,
The mother's kiss and accent mild;
The sister's smile, the brother's clasp, —
All that was valued when a child.

What have we gained in lieu of these?
We sought for wealth, perchance a name;
But what is wealth compared with love,
And who can climb the steep of Fame?
With weary heart and throbbing brow,
And mind with many cares oppressed,
Night after night we seek our couch,
And "sink to sleep but not to rest."

And still through all the busy strife,
Through all the cares and maddening fears
Of life, the heart will wander back
To those beloved and happy years;
And we shall say, in all the earth,
No matter where the feet may roam,
We may not find the stainless truth
That blessed our childhood's happy home.

Friendship is but a hollow mask,
Ambition but an empty name,
And disappointment waits on him
Who follows in pursuit of fame.

And then at last we drop and fade
Like autumn leaves, and fall and die,
With no kind hand to raise the head,
And gently close the dying eye.

Followed by strangers to the grave,
Few our departure to deplore,
The clay folds coldly on the breast,
The mound is raised, and all is o'er !
And yet not all ; for in that land
Where tears and trials never come,
Thank God ! we yet may join the band
Who shared with us our childhood's home.
— R. S.

THE AFTERNOON NAP.

THE farmer sat in his easy chair,
Smoking his pipe of clay,
While his hale old wife, with busy care,
Was clearing the dinner away ;
A sweet little girl with fine blue eyes
On her grandfather's knee was catching flies.

The old man laid his hand on her head,
With a tear on his wrinkled face ;
He thought how often her mother — dead —
Had sat in the self-same place ;

And the tear stole down from his half-shut eye :
“ Don’t smoke ! ” said the child, “ how it makes
you cry ! ”

The house-dog lay stretched out on the floor,
Where the shade after noon used to steal ;
The busy old wife by the open door
Was turning the spinning-wheel ;
And the old brass clock on the mantel-tree
Had plodded along to almost three.

Still the farmer sat in his easy chair,
While close to his heaving breast,
The moistened brow and the cheek so fair
Of his sweet grandchild were pressed ;
His head, bent down on her soft hair, lay ; —
Fast asleep were they both, that Summer
day.

— *Charles G. Eastman.*

THE MOTHER’S BLESSING.

THERE in her high-backed chair she sits,
Sad-eyed dame with the silver hair ;
The shadows lengthen, the daylight flits,
And she seems to listen, as still she knits,
For the sound of the step on the silent stair.

The lamps flash out in the twilight street,
And many a neighbouring casement gleams,
A beacon of home to hurrying feet ;
But the white-haired dame in the high-backed seat
Heeds them not, as she sits and dreams —

Dreams of a boy, long years ago,
Clasped her neck on a summer day,
Begged her blessing, kissed her, and so
Fled with the speed of a hunted doe
Down to the sea and sailed away !

A boy with an eye as blue and bright
As the cloudless noon of a tropic sky ;
A fair-haired lad, and his heart was right —
Was it ten ? Yes, ten long years to-night !
Shall I bless him again before I die ?

“ Here at my knee his prayer he said :
‘ Our Father, all hallowed be thy name ;
Give us this day our daily bread,’
Passing my hand o’er his golden head,
While oft the tears in his blue eyes came.”

Hark ! a step on the silent stair !
A soft, quick step, and a breathing light !
A form kneels low by the high-backed chair,
And lo ! in the curls of her boy’s fair hair
The mother’s fingers are twined to-night.

Is it a dream ? or can it be,

 This tall man, with the beard of gold,
That kneels so low by his mother's knee,
Is the blue-eyed boy that fled to sea
 That sunny morn in the day of old ?

Yes, it is he, for the joyful tears

 Drop from her eyes in a holy rain ;
"Our Father" anew from his lips she hears,
And the mother's blessing of bygone years
 Has brought her prodigal home again.

THE BUCKET.

HOW dear to this heart are the scenes of my
 childhood,

When fond recollection presents them to view ! —
The orchard, the meadow, the deep-tangled wild-
 wood,

And every loved spot which my infancy knew !
The wide-spreading pond, and mill that stood by it ;
The bridge, and the rock where the cataract fell ;
The cot of my father, the dairy-house nigh it ;
And e'en the rude bucket that hung in the well, —
The old oaken bucket, the iron-bound bucket,
The moss-covered bucket which hung in the well.

That moss-covered vessel I hailed as a treasure ;
For often at noon, when returned from the field,
I found it the source of an exquisite pleasure, —
The purest and sweetest that nature can yield.
How ardent I seized it, with hands that were glow-
ing,

And quick to the white-pebbled bottom it fell !
And soon, with the emblem of truth overflowing,
And dripping with coolness, it rose from the well, —
The old oaken bucket, the iron-bound bucket,
The moss-covered bucket arose from the well.

How sweet from the green, mossy brim to receive it,
As poised on the curb, it inclined to my lips !
Not a full, blushing goblet could tempt me to
leave it,

The brightest that beauty or revelry sips.
And now, far removed from the loved habitation,
The tear of regret will intrusively swell,
As fancy reverts to my father's plantation,
And sighs for the bucket that hangs in the well, —
The old oaken bucket, the iron-bound bucket,
The moss-covered bucket that hangs in the well.

— *S. Woodworth.*

A MOTHER'S PICTURE.

SHE seemed an angel to our infant eyes !
 Once when the glorifying moon revealed
 Her who at evening by our pillow kneeled, —
 Soft-voiced and golden-haired, from holy skies
 Flown to her loves on wings of Paradise, —
 We looked to see the pinions half-concealed.
 The Tuscan vines and olives will not yield
 Her back to me who loved her in this wise,
 And since have little known her, but have grown
 To see another mother tenderly
 Watch over sleeping children of my own.
 Perhaps the years have changed her, yet alone
 This picture lingers ; still she seems to me
 The fair young angel of my infancy.

— *Edmund Clarence Stedman.*

CHILDHOOD.

PICTURED in memory's mellowing glass, how
 sweet
 Our infant days, our infant joys to greet ;
 To roam in fancy in each cherished scene,
 The village churchyard, and the village green.
 The woodland walk remote, the greenwood glade,

The mossy seat beneath the hawthorn's shade,
The whitewashed cottage, where the woodbine grew,
And all the favourite haunts our childhood knew !
How sweet, while all the evil shuns the gaze,
To view the unclouded skies of former days !
Beloved age of innocence and smiles,
When each winged hour some new delight beguiles,
When the gay heart, to life's sweet dayspring true,
Still finds some insect pleasure to pursue.
Blest Childhood, hail ! — Thee simply will I sing,
And from myself the artless picture bring ;
These long-lost scenes to me the past restore,
Each humble friend, each *pleasure*, now no more,
And every stump familiar to my sight,
Recalls some fond idea of delight.

This shrubby knoll was once my favourite seat ;
Here did I love at evening to retreat,
And muse alone, till in the vault of night,
Hesper, aspiring, show'd his golden light.
Here once again, remote from human noise,
I sit me down to think of former joys ;
Pause on each scene, each treasured scene, once more,
And once again each infant walk explore,
While as each grove and lawn I recognise,
My melted soul suffuses in my eyes.

— *Henry Kirke White.*

MOTHER.

WHEN she undid her hair at night,
 About the time for lying down,
 She came and knelt. I was so small,
 There in my bed, her curls did fall
 All over me, light gold and brown.

I fell asleep amid her prayers.
 Her fair young face (far off it seems),
 Her girlish voice, her kisses sweet,
 The patter of her busy feet,
 Passed with me into charming dreams.

And when I woke at merry morn,
 Through her gold hair I saw the sun
 Flame strong, shine glad, and glorify
 The great, good world. Oh, never can I
 Forget her words, "My darling one!"

Ah! checkered years since then have crept
 Past her and me, and we have known
 Some sorrow and much tempered joy.
 Far into manhood stands her boy,
 And her gold hair snow-white is blown.

The world has changed by slow degrees,
And as old days recede, alas !
So much of trouble have the new,
Those rare, far joys grow dim seen through
Sad times as through a darkened glass.

But just this morning when I woke,
How lovingly my lips were kissed !
How chaste and clear the sunlight shone
On mother's hair, like gold-dust sown
Athwart thin clouds of silver mist !

CHILDHOOD.

IN my poor mind it is most sweet to muse
Upon the days gone by ; to act in thought
Past seasons o'er, and be again a child ;
To sit in fancy on the turf-clad slope,
Down which the child would roll ; to pluck gay
flowers,
Make posies in the sun, which the child's hand
(Childhood offended soon, soon reconciled),
Would throw away, and straight take up again,
Then fling them to the winds, and o'er the lawn
Bound with so playful and so light a foot,
That the pressed daisy scarce declined her head.

— *Charles Lamb.*

THE OLD ARM CHAIR.

I LOVE it — I love it, and who shall dare
 To chide me for loving that old arm chair !
 I've treasured it long as a sainted prize —
 I've bedewed it with tears, and embalmed it with
 sighs ;
 'Tis bound by a thousand bands to my heart,
 Not a tie will break, not a link will start.
 Would you learn the spell ? a mother sat there ;
 And a sacred thing is that old arm chair.

In childhood's hour I lingered near
 The hallowed seat with listening ear ;
 And gentle words that mother would give,
 To fit me to die, and teach me to live.
 She told me shame would never betide,
 With truth for my creed, and God for my guide ;
 She taught me to lisp my earliest prayer,
 As I knelt beside that old arm chair.

I sat and watched her many a day,
 When her eyes grew dim and her locks were gray,
 And I almost worshipped her when she smiled
 And turned from her Bible to bless her child.

Our Darling.
From painting by A. Schroder.



Years rolled on, but the last one sped —
My idol was shattered — my earth star fled :
I learnt how much the heart can bear,
When I saw her die in that old arm chair.

'Tis past ! 'tis past ! but I gaze on it now
With quivering breath and throbbing brow :
'Twas there she nursed me — 'twas there she
died,

And memory flows with lava tide —
Say it is folly, and deem me weak,
While the scalding tears run down my cheek.
But I love it — I love it, and cannot tear
My soul from my mother's old arm chair.

— *Eliza Cook.*

THE LOST BABIES.

COME, my wife, put down the Bible,
Lay your glasses on the book ;
Both of us are bent and aged —
Backward, mother, let us look.
This is still the same old homestead
Where I brought you long ago,
When the hair was bright with sunshine
That is now like winter's snow.

Let us talk about the babies,
 As we sit here all alone ;
 Such a merry troop of youngsters, —
 How we lost them one by one.

Jack, the first of all our party,
 Came to us one winter's night.
 Jack, you said, should be a parson,
 Long before he saw the light.
 Do you see the great cathedral,
 Filled the transept and the nave,
 Hear the organ gladly pealing,
 Watch the silken hangings wave ?
 See the priest in robes of office,
 With the altar at his back, —
 Would you think that gifted preacher
 Could be our own little Jack ?

Then, a girl with curly tresses
 Used to climb upon my knee
 Like a little fairy princess,
 Ruling at the age of three.
 With the years there came a wedding —
 How your fond heart swelled with pride
 When the lord of all the country
 Chose your baby for his bride !

Watch that stately carriage coming,
And the form reclining there, —
Would you think that brilliant lady
Could be our own little Clare?

Then, the last, a blue-eyed youngster, —
I can hear him prattling now, —
Such a strong and sturdy fellow,
With his broad and honest brow.
How he used to love his mother !
Ah ! I see your trembling lip !
He is far off on the water,
Captain of a royal ship.
See the bronze upon his forehead,
Hear the voice of stern command, —
That's the boy who clung so fondly
To his mother's gentle hand.

Ah ! my wife, we've lost the babies,
Ours so long and ours alone.
What are we to those great people
Stately men and women grown ?
Seldom do we even see them ;
Yes, a bitter tear-drop starts
As we sit here in the firelight,
Lonely hearth and lonely hearts.

All their lives are full without us ;
 They'll stop long enough one day
 Just to lay us in the churchyard,
 Then they'll each go on his way.

MY MOTHER'S HANDS.

SUCH beautiful, beautiful hands !
 They're neither white nor small ;
 And you, I know, would scarcely think
 That they were fair at all.
 I've looked on hands whose form and hue
 A sculptor's dream might be ;
 Yet are those wrinkled, aged hands
 Most beautiful to me.

Such beautiful, beautiful hands !
 Though heart were weary and sad,
 These patient hands kept toiling on,
 That the children might be glad ;
 I always weep, as looking back
 To childhood's distant day,
 I think how those hands rested not,
 When mine were at their play.

Such beautiful, beautiful hands !
 They're growing feeble now,

For time and pain have left their mark
On hands, and heart, and brow.
Alas ! alas ! the nearing time,
And the sad, sad day to me,
When 'neath the daisies, out of sight,
These hands will folded be.

But oh, beyond this shadow land,
Where all is bright and fair,
I know full well these dear old hands
Will palms of victory bear ;
Where crystal streams through endless years
Flow over golden sands,
And where the old grow young again,
I'll clasp my mother's hands.

— *Ellen M. H. Gates.*

SATURDAY AFTERNOON.

I LOVE to look on a scene like this,
Of wild and careless play,
And persuade myself that I am not old,
And my locks are not yet gray ;
For it stirs the blood in an old man's heart,
And makes his pulses fly,
To catch the thrill of a happy voice,
And the light of a pleasant eye.

I have walked the world for fourscore years,
 And they say that I am old —
 That my heart is ripe for the reaper Death,
 And my years are well-nigh told.
 It is very true — it is very true —
 I am old, and I “bide my time ;”
 But my heart will leap at a scene like this,
 And I half renew my prime.

Play on ! play on ! I am with you there,
 In the midst of your merry ring ;
 •I can feel the thrill of the daring jump,
 And the rush of the breathless swing,
 I hide with you in the fragrant hay,
 And I whoop the smothered call,
 And my feet slip on the seedy floor,
 And I care not for the fall.

I am willing to die when my time shall come,
 And I shall be glad to go —
 For the world, at best, is a weary place,
 And my pulse is getting low ;
 But the grave is dark, and the heart will fail
 In treading its gloomy way ;
 And it wiles my heart from its dreariness
 To see the young so gay.

— *Nathaniel Parker Willis.*

AMONG THE BEAUTIFUL PICTURES.

A MONG the beautiful pictures
That hang on Memory's wall,
Is one of a dim old forest,
That seemeth best of all ;
Not for its gnarled oaks olden,
Dark with the mistletoe ;
Not for the violets golden
That sprinkle the vale below ;
Not for the milk-white lilies
That lean from the fragrant ledge,
Coquetting all day with the sunbeams,
And stealing their golden edge ;
Not for the vines on the upland,
Where the bright red berries rest ;
Nor the pinks, nor the pale, sweet cowslip,
It seemeth to me the best.

I once had a little brother
With eyes that were dark and deep ;
In the lap of that old dim forest
He lieth in peace asleep ;
Light as the down of the thistle,
Free as the winds that blow,

We roved there the beautiful summers,
The summers of long ago ;
But his feet on the hills grew weary,
And one of the autumn eves
I made for my little brother
A bed of the yellow leaves.

Sweetly his pale arms folded
My neck in a meek embrace,
As the light of immortal beauty
Silently covered his face ;
And when the arrows of sunset
Lodged in the tree-tops bright,
He fell, in his saint-like beauty,
Asleep by the gates of light.
Therefore, of all the pictures
That hang on Memory's wall,
The one of the dim old forest
Seemeth the best of all.

— *Alice Cary.*

A COMFORTER.

“ **W**ILL she come to me, little Effie?
Will she come in my arms to rest,
And nestle her head on my shoulder,
While the sun goes down in the West?

“ I and Effie will sit together,
All alone, in this great arm-chair:—
Is it silly to mind it, darling,
When life is so hard to bear?

“ No one comforts me like my Effie;
Yet I think she does not try,—
Only looks with a wistful wonder
Why grown people should ever cry;

“ While her little soft arms close tighter
Round my neck in their clinging hold;—
Well, I must not cry on your hair, dear,
For my tears might tarnish the gold.

“ I am tired of trying to read, dear;
It is worse to talk and seem gay:
There are some kinds of sorrow, Effie,
It is useless to thrust away.

“ But my comforter knows a lesson
 Wiser, truer than all the rest : —
 That to help and heal a sorrow,
 Love and silence are always best.

“ Well, who is my comforter — tell me ?
 Effie smiles, but she will not speak ;
 Or look up through the long curled lashes
 That are shading her rosy cheek.

“ Is she thinking of talking fishes,
 The blue-bird, or magical tree ?
 Perhaps I am thinking, my darling,
 Of something that never can be.

“ You long — don’t you, dear ? — for the Genii,
 Who were slaves of lamps and of rings ;
 And I — I am sometimes afraid, dear,
 I want as impossible things.

“ But hark ! there is Nurse calling Effie !
 It is bedtime, so run away !
 And I must go back, or the others
 Will be wondering why I stay.

The Children's Prayer.
From painting by E. Munier.



"So good night to my darling Effie;
Keep happy, sweetheart, and grow wise!
Here's one kiss for her golden tresses,
And two for her sleepy eyes."

— *Adelaide Anne Procter.*

ARE THE CHILDREN AT HOME?

EACH day when the glow of sunset
Fades in the western sky,
And the wee ones, tired of playing,
Go tripping lightly by,
I steal away from my husband,
Asleep in his easy-chair,
And watch from the open doorway
Their faces fresh and fair.

Alone in the dear old homestead,
That once was full of life,
Ringing with girlish laughter, —
Echoing boyish strife, —
We two are waiting together;
And, oft, as the shadows come,
With tremulous voice he calls me:
"It is night! are the children home?"

"Yes, love!" I answer him gently,
 "They're all home long ago;"
 And I sing, in my quivering treble,
 A song so soft and low,
 Till the old man drops to slumber,
 With his head upon his hand,
 And I tell to myself the number
 Home in the Better Land.

Home, where never a sorrow
 Shall dim their eyes with tears!
 Where the smile of God is on them
 Through all the summer years!
 I know, — yet my arms are empty,
 That fondly folded seven,
 And the mother heart within me
 Is almost starved for heaven.

Sometimes, in the dusk of the evening,
 I only shut my eyes,
 And the children are all about me,
 A vision from the skies:
 The babes whose dimpled fingers
 Lost the way to my breast,
 And the beautiful ones, the angels,
 Passed to the world of the blest.

With never a cloud upon them,
I see their radiant brows :
My boys that I gave to freedom, —
The red sword sealed their vows !
In a tangled Southern forest,
Twin brothers, bold and brave
They fell ; and the flag they died for,
Thank God ! floats over their grave.

A breath, and the vision is lifted
Away on wings of light,
And again we two are together,
All alone in the night.
They tell me his mind is failing,
But I smile at idle fears ;
He is only back with the children,
In the dear and peaceful years.

And still as the summer sunset
Fades away in the west,
And the wee ones, tired of playing,
Go trooping home to rest,
My husband calls from his corner :
“ Say, love, have the children come ? ”
And I answer, with eyes uplifted :
“ Yes, dear ! they are all at home ! ”
— *Margaret Elizabeth Sangster.*

SCENES OF CHILDHOOD.

AND do I then behold again the scene,
Where once I sported when a wanton child;
The mead, the church, the streamlet running wild,
With here and there a fairy spot between,
Smiling, as there rude storm had never been?

Alas! how changed are we who once did rove,
Calder, thy then enchanted banks along;
Retiring now to the sequester'd grove,
Now cheerful hearkening to the accustom'd song
That rose at eventide these vales among!

The charm and hope of youth the green leaves
wear;
'Tis only man that blossoms and decays,
To know no second spring. I thoughtful gaze
With dream of years long past, and drop a tear.

— *Edward Moxon.*

THE END.

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